

Intro:

This is Michael Cowen, and welcome to Trial Lawyer Nation- You got to have the right case because if you take it up and it's the wrong case, then you could make some really bad law that's going to affect a lot of plaintiffs- There's always an answer, the joy is in finding it- One of the reasons that I love being a lawyer is this exact process- The way we live our life has nothing to do with the presentation sequence at trial- As trial lawyers, we pick up and move on and keep going- You're losing or gaining one out of every 10 jurors, which can really make a huge difference in the ultimate result of the case- Whatever you think about, you create- Learn all you can, and never stop. And then have the guts to try case after case after case- Welcome to the award-winning podcast, Trial Lawyer Nation, your source to win bigger verdicts, get more cases, and manage your law firm. And now, here's your host, noteworthy author, sought-after speaker, and renowned trial lawyer, Michael Cowen.

Michael Cowen:

Today on Trial Lawyer Nation, we have Cliff Atkinson. Cliff is the author of a book called Beyond Bullet Points, but more importantly, he has worked with some of the top trial lawyers in the country on settlements and trials, including a verdict of over \$4 billion. And Cliff was nice enough to come and talk to us to tell us on how we can better present our cases visually and better tell our stories. Thank you for coming on today, Cliff.

Cliff Atkinson:

Thank you so much for having me. I'm really excited to be with you today.

Michael Cowen:

The more I've done research about you, it's funny because we have a lot of people that do work with lawyers that ask to be on the show, and my answer is almost always no, and because if someone is just trying to sell a service. This is my baby and I really, I'm not going to allow it to be used just for someone to run an infomercial, but then Delisi, our marketing manager, talked to you and said, "You need to have this guy on." And then I figured out who you were, I'm like, "Oh my gosh, this is the guy that worked with Lanier on his big verdict, this is the guy that wrote Beyond Bullet Points which I bought over a decade ago." I'm like, "How do I not get this guy on?" So thank you, thank you, thank you for coming on.

Cliff Atkinson:

Absolutely. And I'm just happy, I started first working with you guys in 2005 and it has just been such an awesome privilege to be able to work side by side with you all to find justice for your clients. It's just been a blast, and especially what I love the most is just the whole, maybe this'll be our theme today, but just the creative part of this, how it is that you can integrate story, visual, visual storytelling and a lot of the new technology and the tools we have today. So it's just been an exciting ride and it's really a pleasure to be with you today.

Michael Cowen:

So how did you get into this part of the world, this lawyer storytelling and visuals?

Cliff Atkinson:

Well, so the backstory was, so I, back when PowerPoint first came out, the first time I used PowerPoint was in business school in the late '90s. The tool had just come out and it was I had to just create for a

business school report, a PowerPoint based on the project that I had done. And I just opened it up and I typed in the bullet points like everybody else did and just sent that in and it went just fine, but over time I started to realize as I went back to use the tool, I wanted to create a video kind of like for this personal project, and I didn't know how to use video editing software.

Cliff Atkinson:

And I went back into PowerPoint and I figured out, if you look at PowerPoint, if you look at all the slides together at one time and they're blank, I just had this aha moment, this is like a storyboard. You could put anything on here, it doesn't have to be text, it doesn't have to look exactly the same on every slide. You've probably seen some of these sort of PowerPoint, right, with they're just bombarded with text and all this information.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. And then you're zoning out and falling asleep.

Cliff Atkinson:

Exactly. So that was kind of the, you know, that was the big problem at that time, is just that this tool is being used... Before PowerPoint came about, people were creating these 35 millimeter slides or these acetate overhead transparencies, but it was all filled with text. And so I realized that this tool could actually be a creative medium, and so I started to write these articles about how it is you could tell a story, you can put images in here, it could all images, it could be like a film or a blockbuster. And so I wrote these articles, I didn't have any clients at the time, but I just was passionate about telling the story, that you could tell a story in a visual way using this tool.

Cliff Atkinson:

And so I was just sitting at home one day and then I got a call, and picked up the phone, the guy said, "Hey, this is David. You might've heard of my company, it's called General Electric, and we've been reading your articles. Will you come help us at the board of directors of General Electric to help us to tell visual stories at the board level?" So that was my first client.

Michael Cowen:

Wow, starting at the top. Yeah.

Cliff Atkinson:

I'm going to start at the top. And they were pretty well back in, this was probably 2003, I think it was. And so I talked about that at a conference and somebody from Microsoft was there, and they were looking for an author to write a book about how to use PowerPoint in a different way, in a more creative way, because their other books at the time were just about how you open up the tool and how you add the bullet points, et cetera. And so they invited me to write a book, and then that became Beyond Bullet Points, and that came out in March of 2005. And then it was just out those couple months, and then Mark Lanier had his big Vioxx case coming up. And his story is that every time he has a big trial, he likes to take some skillset to the next level. He had already been using PowerPoint, but was looking for some new ideas and how to use it in a fresh way, and so he apparently was on vacation before trial, just taking it easy and was reading new books and then he picked up my book.

Cliff Atkinson:

And it was the one book, he says, out of all these books that was really about storytelling, about using this tool in an interesting way. So his office called me and invited me to work with him in Texas in 2005, and then we created the opening and it was my very first time in a courtroom. So I'm not a lawyer, I've just come completely out, fresh, into the profession which it turns out has a lot of value to be able to come and look at things in a fresh perspective. That is a big thing when I do work on cases, if you've worked on a case for so long, it can really be hard to kind of step out of the minutia and the detail.

Cliff Atkinson:

And so I worked with Mark, we created that opening, and then he delivered it, and again, I'd never even known that PowerPoint was being used in a courtroom. And he delivered the opening that first day and the next day, all the national press coverage was about presentations and how dramatically better his presentation was than the defense, which gave a traditional bullet point and it was all about how wonderful a company we are, and so on. And so Fortune Magazine called it, "Frighteningly powerful," how the images and the story and his storytelling skills all came together.

Cliff Atkinson:

And there was a big 10-foot screen behind him too, so that's another big part that I've always advocated from the beginning, it's just you have the potential to create an immersive media experience. So he was inside of this giant 10-foot screen like he's in front of a theatrical backdrop or a giant television set. And the way that the images were crafted, they were very simple, easy to understand, and the jurors are immediately just immersed in the story. So that really was all part of how that all came together, and that was my very first opening statement.

Cliff Atkinson:

And since then, he's obviously told a lot of folks about this, how it happened, and folks read the article. So since then, I've been working... pretty much most of my work these days is with plaintiff attorneys on these type of opening statements.

Michael Cowen:

And what was the result of that case that Mark was drawing?

Cliff Atkinson:

So he won a \$253 million verdict, and then it was interesting, so the staff had told me that they interviewed the jurors six months later and they still remembered the opening statement. So that really became a sticky visual experience for them where it was just so memorable, and that's a big part of what I'm introducing or advocating, is ways that you can use imagery in a way that really is going to make information easy to understand and that'll have longterm sticking power.

Michael Cowen:

You just don't follow the rules. I mean, your first corporate client is the board at General Electric and then your first lawyer client is Mark Lanier on a 200 and something million dollar verdict. I mean, that's awesome. I mean, just forget starting at the bottom and working up.

Cliff Atkinson:

Yeah, it was all accidental but I would say, it's a story also about just following your passion. I was just doing something that I really saw this potential for this tool, I just loved the creativity. And also, it's a synthesis, there's a part... I've been reading more lately on the latest research about the hemispheres of the brain and so on, and the idea that the left brain is more about the detail and dissecting things into the pieces, where the right hemisphere is more about the metaphor and about the big picture. And to me, that's one of the most pleasing or interesting or engaging parts of the experience, is just the synthesis of this Mark and so many of these other plaintiff attorneys, such as yourself, are just brilliant thinkers, and now taking that brilliance of the left brain and the analytical thought and then bringing in this creative dimension, is just so much fun and so interesting to me.

Michael Cowen:

So what are some of the things that you found effective as far as visually telling our stories at trial?

Cliff Atkinson:

Well, so I would start with the story before the visuals because even in that first case, the opening of Mark's very first, we had just a picture of a couple up on the screen, and it was a family photo of Bob and Carol, and Mark just started out with story. So there was no text, there was no abstract analytical thinking, it was just a story and a personally story that visually, the jurors could relate to. So then, he introduced the jurors to Carol, who was there in the courtroom, and told the story about how she was single late in life and her daughter introduced her to Bob on a blind date. And then they hit it off and pretty soon, they fell in love and got married.

Cliff Atkinson:

And then they were married happily for 11 months until something happened that changed everything forever. And then the image changes so that the background is stripped out and now there's just a chalk outline. So it's rhetorically, even verbally as I tell this story, it's a powerful rhetorical shift away from a product liability case into a different kind of case that involves chalk outlines, more of a murder mystery. And then the next slide, I think that really kind of brought it home, is then I just put the CSI logo, and then Mark said, "You get to be like CSI detectives. You get to sort through all the evidence and figure out what killed Bob."

Cliff Atkinson:

So I think that the thing that makes all of this work and what drives it has got to be the story underlying the verbal story, the sequence and ideas, and then when that's in place then the visuals are just writing on top of that and can magnify and become exponentially more powerful. So it's not even just about having an image or any image, it's if you've got the powerful story, and then you can put that CSI logo on top if, then that's going to just give it X times more power than it would just a random image. So it's about the meaningful synergy of the verbal part and the visual part, and how those two, if they're in sync, can really leverage the power of the entire story.

Michael Cowen:

One of the biggest challenges for me is I do the work and I get all these facts. I mean, what happened, who, where, what, when, maybe even why. But taking all those facts and distilling them into a winning story, and when I say story, it's got to be true. It's not like we're making up stories.

Cliff Atkinson:

Of course.

Michael Cowen:

But how do we tell the story in such a way that we bring out the truth? What is some advice you have for sorting through the facts of what is the story and what isn't, and avoiding all the tangents and getting something that connects?

Cliff Atkinson:

Well, I love how you describe that too because I also work with folks in other professions and I tell them that you guys have one of the hardest jobs out of all of these because you've only got this finite set of facts and you're constrained by what you can say, what's included. You're not a Hollywood screenwriter who can just make things up out of nowhere. Everything has got to be very specific and factual. So one of the things that I do is I've got this tool, I tend to work with clients in a one day session, and the first half of the day is really finding the structure, getting the verbal part of the ideas in place. And I have this tool I call the story template, I describe it in my book, but the way that it works is that you start out with just three. If you're going to break up your opening in just to three parts, what are those three parts? Or another way to put it, if the jurors could only remember three things when you're finished what are those three things you want them to remember?

Cliff Atkinson:

So very often, it might be the company knew about the danger and they did nothing, part one, and then part two might be the company injured or killed, in part two, and then part three is the company tries to avoid responsibility, and that might be if there's a cover-up and the damages and then the, yeah but, so we're butting the very last thing and saying what they're going to say, just saying it first. So that might be a classic structure, but it's built on threes. And so that's really the... It can be a very painful exercise in many of these cases, spending that half day, because I'm really introducing constraint, and the idea that we've got to break it up into three. And then once we've got the first third, then we break that up into three. So I think the constraint is the most powerful technique to help to distill.

Michael Cowen:

And it is hard, I mean, and we were fortunately or unfortunately, I have mixed feelings still, it settled late at night on the Saturday night before the trial was going to start on Monday, but my partner Sonia and I had worked up a case and we had legitimately found 20-something things this company did wrong, and any one of which could've made a good case. But we couldn't try a case about 20-something things they did wrong, and if we said they did 25 things wrong and the jury only believed that they did 23 of them wrong, well they might've held it against us. And so how do I turn this into a 20 minute story? And what is the most powerful part of the story?

Michael Cowen:

And I will tell you, it was more work to cut out and distill down than it was to do all the work together, the stuff to begin with.

Cliff Atkinson:

That's super hard and it's so important that you did that, because that increases the power. What is that old saying, that I would've written you a short note but I didn't have enough time?

Michael Cowen:

Yeah.

Cliff Atkinson:

Just that idea that it does take a lot of hard work. And to me, it's about the difference between, often people might say, "Well, you need to dumb it down for the jury," but I say, "No, you have to distill it down to its essence. You've got to get... It's still factually true in its essence, and how it is that you find that." And it's so, so important because from what we know about the research about cognition and people's short-term memory, but you might have 25 amazing hot documents you want to show, and then that's a big mistake some folks make, is they just start laying out the 25 but after number three, you've lost them. They don't have a framework, they don't have a way to hold onto the overall narrative, and that to me is the most important part, as I've worked in all these cases, is that you've got to front load a simple structure for jurors to their minds to be able to hold onto.

Cliff Atkinson:

And again, it's not... Some folks might say, "Well, it's just for high school educated jurors and in the end you have to dumb it down." But no, it's not, I don't think you have to- you've got to, for all of us, we need a structure or a framework. Here are the three ways that we're going to pursue this, or these are the three elements. When you say that, that helps the mind to relax and it holds a framework for the complexity that's going to come. So it's really about this upfront hard work of distilling and finding that structure, that will make it easier for jurors to understand this and then be able to process and be with you the whole time.

Michael Cowen:

And I really, the more I've thought about this, the more I've done this, it's not dumbing down, it's actually respecting and trusting the jurors enough that if you give them the core truth, they can get it. And you don't need to beat them up with 25 hot documents, you can show them the big stuff and they'll get it. And then the rest will come up during the trial.

Cliff Atkinson:

Absolutely. And I think in that visually on a slide where sometimes you don't leave out the 25, you might say, then they did X bad thing, X bad thing, X bad, three of those, and then boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, really quick and then 25 show up. You don't have to show the number four through 25, they get the picture that they did a bunch of bad things. So you don't have to meticulously go through every single things. And again, I think that may go back to that, again, that left hemisphere is wanting every detail in there, but the right hemisphere is wanting the big picture and the metaphor. So maybe it's about that, maybe as we might want to get all that detail, that's more that were, in my head, a preference for that, but at the same time we've got to make sure that the jurors have the anchoring, they've got the big picture, that they're with you from beginning to middle to end.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. And I just think until we have the big picture or the anchoring, we don't know what to do with all that information. That's why it becomes overwhelming.

Cliff Atkinson:

Right. I mean, people just check out so fast. So it really is true what they say, is that you've only got a very narrow window of opportunity to be able to grab people's attention. And that to me, it might be controversial to say this, but some of these guidelines for starting openings often start with a very abstract statement or something I don't quite understand. I will hear some of these sometimes like a rule, but it's just so abstract, like I don't get it. So I think it's so important that you start with a story, with something like we're describing with what Mark did. This personal story, a family photo, I can relate to that, I'm with you on that and I can go along with you in this story. But if it's something, and it's often the case, where I passionately advocate this and I understand it for me, but if the jurors don't get it then it's not really going to go anywhere that you want it to go.

Michael Cowen:

It's funny, because there are some people who will say, "This is the only way, you have to do it this way," and they've had incredible success. And then someone else will say the exact opposite, and they've had incredible success. And so I think it's discovering the story and telling it in a compelling fashion that works. And I think that there are lots of different ways to get there, and there's not one magic formula, because there's incredibly successful people... And I think a lot of it has to do with who you are.

Cliff Atkinson:

That's a good point, that the personality and the credibility, the ethos, is the primary, if people have a gut connection with you, that's probably the most primal and important thing.

Michael Cowen:

But I agree with the rule stuff. I mean, I was getting ready to trial a stop sign case. Well, I'm not going to go tell the juror, "When a driver approaches the stop sign, he must stop." I mean, they're going to think, "You think we're idiots?" I mean, they all drive, they have their license, they know that you have to stop. Even when you're in elementary school, you know you have to stop for a stop sign. So I wasn't going to start... I mean, I love David Ball, I mean I worked with him, I've learned a lot from him, but I'm not going to start that case with that role because it doesn't make sense. Now, I was going to show, while I'm telling the story, I was setting a scene and there's an intersection and there's a stop sign. That's the rule, I don't need to say what you have to do at a stop sign. I need a photo or an image or hold up a stop sign.

Cliff Atkinson:

Yes. Well, and to me, I love all the rules stuff too and use it all the time. I think for me, it's about making them pithy, making them easy to understand. So for example, a doctor must always keep their patients safe, for example. That it's got to be in their language, and that's a big thing too I think, that I'm advocating for in a lot of these cases, is to put it in jury language. So I think we're all so used to the technical terminology and the jargon of the law and so on, but for folks that they just don't have any idea about that again, we're talking about how easy it is for people to check out and lose focus, the more we can keep it in very concise and understandable language, the jury language, I think the more powerful and accessible the information will be.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. And I think what it is, we so much don't want to sound like we don't know what we're talking about. So we spend all this time learning all the technical stuff, and then we want to use it to show how smart we are. But the most important people in the case are the jurors. The case is about them, it's not about us. And if we're not doing something to help them, then we're wasting our time.

Cliff Atkinson:

Yes. And I love what you said earlier, I mean I just love this whole idea, like you're just really respecting them and their intelligence, and that's why you're doing all this hard work up front-

Michael Cowen:

Yeah.

Cliff Atkinson:

... to make it easy to understand for them.

Michael Cowen:

And honestly, when you talk to them then, they are smart. They do get. And I don't believe that we have-

Cliff Atkinson:

Oh, yeah. Absolutely.

Michael Cowen:

... dumb jurors and we pull the wool over their... I mean, I feel like jurors, I've won a case because jurors noticed a little bitty detail in a photo that even I missed that proved we were right. I mean, they're incredibly smart and they're trying to do the right thing, and it's just our job to give them the tools they need to do it.

Cliff Atkinson:

And I love in these focus groups, watching the jurors deliberate and find out what stuck out in their mind, what didn't. And yeah, so I watched one recently was a focus group, and the first thing that the juror said is, "I don't understand what any of this is about, but I guess we're here to do what we're supposed to do." And especially when I heard that, I was just like, "Oh my God..." I mean, in that particular focus group, it was just an overwhelming fire hose of information that they were trying to present, and to me the lesson learned is really you've got to do that hard work of taking most of it out and just focusing on what your big weaknesses are, for example, and focus grouping that. I mean, you just can't throw it all in there and think that it's all going to stick with the jurors because they're just going to say, "No, I don't know what you're talking about."

Michael Cowen:

And we forget that we're working on a case for one, two, sometimes three years to absorb all this. You can't expect someone to get three years of experience in 20 minutes.

Cliff Atkinson:

Absolutely. And there's a book called Made to Stick by the Heath brothers and they talk about it and they call this the curse of knowledge, is that when you've gone through this whole process, like you said, for three years, well you went through the whole process when somebody new didn't have that three years, they're just completely fresh to it. So you-

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. The beginner's mind concept, you have to approach with the beginner's mind. And actually, it's one of the things that, like when I've jumped in to try a case at the last minute for somebody else, it's actually easier because I'm approaching it like the jury is because I have not had all that build up. Now, it's sometimes frustrating because I might not have done exactly what I would've done in working it up, but as far as the advocacy part, it's easier to come in fresh at the end.

Cliff Atkinson:

Absolutely. So that can be a value of bringing in a consultant or outsider, or even somebody who might be in your staff unfamiliar with the case, bring them in, ask them what they think. But I was just thinking of some other things too, one other technique that I found really useful. I was doing a trial guides presentation, I was with Pat Malone, it was actually, I think it was a rule focused conference. And I was looking for a way to help with this distillation we're talking about, that rule of three is one way. But another way to help distill something to its essence, in that workshop, it turned out to work out really well, I introduced the form of a haiku. So a haiku is a form of a poem with five syllables, seven syllables and five syllables, so it's just three lines, five, seven, five. And then during the workshop, I just said, "Okay, I'm going to give you two minutes to write a haiku of your case."

Michael Cowen:

Oh, wow.

Cliff Atkinson:

And so we took the two minutes, and then in two minutes, I asked if anybody wanted to share and Mike Kelly was there, if you know Mike, and I mean he just read his. Like, oh my God, as you started to hear some of these short poems, they got right down to the heart of the emotion, it was very engaging, it was distilled down to its essence. So that could be a handy thing to try, is just to kind of write a five, seven, five poem and try to distill it down quickly. But I think the key there is just to do it quite, just give yourself two minutes, five minutes, and try that or with some colleagues on their cases, get together and do that, that could be a really powerful way to distill something.

Michael Cowen:

I'm going to try it, that's awesome. I'm going to try that.

Cliff Atkinson:

It's about the constraint, with just this limited number of words, what are the few words. And then just by and large, every one of the poems, it got down to the emotion, I was hurt, broken, damaged, those words were the most poignant and got right to the heart of the emotion of the case.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah.

Commercial 1:

Each year, the law firm of Cowen | Rodriguez | Peacock pays millions of dollars in co-counsel fees to attorneys nationwide on trucking and commercial vehicle cases. If you have an injury case involving death or catastrophic injuries and would like to partner with our firm, please contact us. You can reach

Delisi Friday by calling 210 941 1301, or send an email to delisi@cowenlaw.com, that's D-E-L-I-S-I @cowenlaw.com. She will coordinate a time for Michael Cowen to speak with you in person or by phone to discuss the case in detail and see where we can add value in a partnership. And now, back to the show.

Michael Cowen:

You've mentioned three, so you mentioned the role of threes, what is it about threes?

Cliff Atkinson:

Well, I always link it back to our limitation of short-term memory, so the research around that says that we can hold three to four chunks of new information in working memory at any one time. So it used to be that phone numbers were really long and then they broke them up. Now we've got the area code which is three digits, the prefix three digits, and then we've got the last part which is four digits. But it's actually just three... So it's that it's broken up into three chunks. So that helps up to remember having things in three chunks. But if you look across written history, there's 3X structures, there's the trinity, threes are just literally everywhere, so I think it's just baked in, both culturally, but I think cognitively, that it's just easier to remember three or four and then after that point, it starts to trail off. We just don't remember that anymore.

Michael Cowen:

Even in religion class in high school, I went to a Catholic school, we learned Biblical numerology and three had a meaning, and that's the reason that's it's 666 or something, something, something. I mean, three is mysterious. Three is... But it had a significance, and you'd have threes a lot Biblically in literature, and then we always tired... I know that I tried to do the rule of threes, but I don't know why it works. So I was just curious.

Cliff Atkinson:

Yeah. So I see the science part, but then if you just go back thousands of years, it's just been part of who we are as humanity, I think. And that tapping into that, just taps into that power of millennia or longer to be able to communicate information.

Michael Cowen:

So once we get some idea, we're within the constraints of okay, we've got a simple compelling story to tell, which isn't easy. Now, how do we use the visual medium to help tell that story?

Cliff Atkinson:

Well, so then with that Vioxx case, so then it's with a theme. So then in that case I was beginning to describe, you get to be like CSI detectives, that makes it relatable, I'm involved in this. Then we presented with the rest of that opening. Mark said that we're going to show you a mountain of evidence that points to this pharmaceutical company that put out a drug that they knew could injure people, and kill people, but they didn't tell anybody, they hid that. They're going to tell another side of the story and it's up to you to find justice for Mrs. Ernst, and you can do that by following the three parts of this case. So it's a case about a company that had motive, a company that had means, and how the motive and means come together.

Cliff Atkinson:

So all of that is just so important because verbally, the verbiage actually is what the infrastructure for the visuals is. So again, if you can find that pithy, that engaging thematic element, then the visuals are going to be easy to find on top of that. So the hardest part is actually to find the verbal theme, and then, so in that example, well it was just finding the CSI logo, that was so easy, or the motive, means, and money where money was just a stack of bills. So then it's almost like the images are super, super simple, but it was really that sophistication of the structure and the metaphor, the theme, that brought those two together. So the more that you can spend time on those words and on their theme, the easier the visuals will be and the more powerful they will be.

Cliff Atkinson:

So one place to get those are in... The place where we got the CSI was from the juror questionnaires, because Dr. Bob who works with Mark had I think asked the question, "What's your favorite TV show?" So many people had put CSI, which was super popular at the time, it still is a classic show, and then as we were talking about themes, that CSI just popped up, I think maybe Dr. Bob said it, and I'm like, "Oh, yeah, okay. Perfect, put that on a slide." And then that slide was done. So it's all about that, it's about finding the simple metaphor.

Cliff Atkinson:

And here's another example. So I'm working on a really complex financial case, they're some of the most difficult ones to... They so abstract and so complex with financial instruments and so on. And the story in this case, we're distilling it down, was basically that the CEO of the company took all these distressed financial instruments and then put them, let's actually have a blue bucket. He put them in a bucket and then he put a big discount on the bucket, so a big discount tag on top of that, and then he sold it to his friends at a steep discount so they could save all that money.

Cliff Atkinson:

And so with that, I actually went out, so once we got the bucket metaphor in place, so just went out, you go onto Google, look for a blue bucket, we got the picture, and then just created a very simple slide to show the bucket. And then I had some, like a piece of real estate or a deed with some cash and then showed the money moving over to another bucket. And what was interesting about that case is that the jurors during deliberation were asking about the bucket. So that very, very simple metaphor actually became something that helped the attorney to win this case, because something that was so complex and difficult to communicate, we were able to distill that down to the simplicity of that metaphor, and then with that metaphor, to actually have a real picture of a bucket. And recently, I did another version of that where the guy actually had a real bucket that he held in the courtroom.

Cliff Atkinson:

And so I think it works like that. So it's not a matter of just going out and searching for random images to illustrate, but it's got to be that upfront distilling and finding the metaphor. And once you've got the metaphor, then how easy is it to find a picture of a blue bucket, or to go buy this. The one I have here is \$4 off of Amazon, right? And yeah, I want to throw that in as a side note too, that with the images, it's so important we've got the images on the screen, but then also, and Mark is such a master at these and people like Zoe Littlepage at bringing in the courtroom toy, so the physical elements, like a bucket, or other ways that you can describe complex topics to actually have, in addition to the screen, you want to

make it 3D, 4D, bring it into the courtroom and so people are putting their hands on it and they can see the scale.

Cliff Atkinson:

You're really wanting to have the visuals on the screen be a partnership with the physical mediums and then you want to switch over to an Elmo sometimes then you want to skip something, you want to have a board. You're really creating an immersive, entertaining experience for the jurors. And that's a cool thing, I was such a big fan Zoe Littlepage in addition to Mark, and other plaintiffs attorneys, but one of the things that I remember that she said is that one of the jurors, after a trial that she had won, said that, "You know what, Zoe? Every morning I looked forward to seeing what it is that you were going to do that day."

Cliff Atkinson:

So that idea of you're just making this engaging and interesting and fun, is just so powerful. And it makes it more interesting for you and for the jurors as well.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. I was going to ask you, I mean I think you answered part of this but I'd like you to expand a little bit more. So I've heard people say that you should be high tech and create this immersive experience, I've heard people say, "No, no, no, use boards, boards are permanent and high tech looks like a cartoon," I know people say, "Well, look for physical things that you can interact with and have sit around and leave on the counsel table or leave somewhere where they can see them the whole time." And you seem to be advocating for a mix. What is the thought behind that?

Cliff Atkinson:

Yeah, I say do both and then use the PowerPoint and use the images as the master narrative that ties it all together. So for example, if you are using the theme about red flags, like the company's had a study that warned against adverse effects, that you have on the slide, it would be a picture of a red flag next to the document, and then you would actually have a red flag in person on the table, and you put the first red flag down. And then the next slide might be talking about the next document and the next evidence that they ignored, and you do a second red flag. But then on your table, you've already got the first one and now you put a second one down, until your table, you're filling up with 16 red flags.

Cliff Atkinson:

And so that serves the rhetorical and visual, those devices help to use the power of the screen itself to illustrate this and the focus on that red flag, that the now having this in person, that would be an example of it's a persistent visual presence that now has more power, and then we turn the PowerPoint off, it's still there. And that's a good example, like you just mentioned the boards. You can have things showing up on the screen but then you're building something on the board and like a timeline, for example, you might build that and add stuff on with the timeline. So, but the two are working in conjunction. So the beauty of the screen and the power of the screen is to focus and to magnify any particular piece of information, and then these other mediums can be great ways to show the persistence or keep it in focus for a longer period after you're done looking at any particular slide.

Michael Cowen:

And to all of our listeners, I mean I know a lot of us listen to this while we're walking or jogging or driving in the car, and I appreciate that, but for this particular episode, I mean, Cliff just held up a red flag and the first thing I wrote down was like, "Where can I buy a red flag?" Because you're going to want to watch the- Well, you want to go to our YouTube page and watch because he's held up a bucket and he's held up a flag. It's only been a few things, but it's inspiring and I just want to tell you Cliff, I mean I just, I'm so glad we're doing this because I'm like, "That is such a great idea. That's such a great idea." But I do encourage the listeners, this is when you might want to watch a little bit, and definitely look in the show notes, we'll have links about where you can buy a red flag. I'm not going to say where to buy a blue bucket because I think anyone can figure that out.

Cliff Atkinson:

Right. Oh yeah.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. I would say Walmart, but that's... So where do you find the visuals?

Cliff Atkinson:

So once you've done that hard upfront work, and again, I mentioned when I worked on these one day sessions, the first half day is just on the words. Then once they got that in place, then we start adding the visuals. So the big sources for visuals, number one is going to be stuff you already have, so that might be your documents, it could be PDFs, Zoom for those PDFs, any physical evidence that you might have. A big overlooked element is screen captures, so using Google Maps if you're showing, if it's a car wreck case, you maybe want to get Google Earth and you zoom into where it happened, and you can actually... and Google Earth will let you create a little video so that you zoom into the actual location.

Cliff Atkinson:

One of the biggest, if you've got dash cam video, oh my gosh that's so amazing if you can get that. I worked on a case recently on a trucking accident, and we had, it was like 20 seconds, I think, of a dash cam video showing everything. And it was so cool because, I mean I had a lot of fun with that one because, so the kickoff, when they set up, they just played the video. So let's say it's, what it is? One, two... Six seconds, 12 seconds, so it was a very short video. And then that was just because it shows the one trucker just driving by and then the other one cutting in front of him and then he swerved out of the way, and then he's screaming and then he crashed into the ditch.

Cliff Atkinson:

And so the start of that was just to play that video, and that's it. They just stood up, played the video, and you could hear the scream and all that's in the video. And then what he said verbally then to set it up was like, "That looked like it happened so fast, but what we're going to do is actually do slow motion of it, and tell you how everything led up to this moment, how everything led up to this crash." So then we went back and just did the first second of the video and said, "Here at this point, you see that they're driving up here but they shouldn't even have been in the first place. They veered off, and the plan that was approved by the state and by the industry, you have to get preapproval to veer off, and they did not. They pulled over to the side on this road where there wasn't enough room, that's because earlier that day, the crew had gotten together and they decided, "We're in a rush, let's go the other way."

Cliff Atkinson:

And then part two, then we got closer to where it happened and then this one particular driver just decided just to pull out without even looking that there was another vehicle coming. So it was kind of cool because it was taking the short video, but then it's almost like doing the frame by frame, as if you're ever working in video, you can kind of go slow through. And using that as a convention to tell the story. So that's just a great example of just this existing piece of a dash cam video became a very powerful storytelling tool, and it was something that they already had. So that could be a big source, just whatever existing evidence you have, screen captures, a huge overlooked way of presenting information.

Cliff Atkinson:

And then in addition to that, once you've got that probably 80% of the visuals, then there might be things that you do custom medical illustrations or 3D reconstruction of something that happened at a work site. And then beyond that, if you're just looking for stock photography, then there's, these days the first place I would go is I would just go do a Google search, an image search, to just see what's out there. So let's just say your one case, I think it was a diesel engine, was the topic. And so we just typed in the specific information about the diesel engine and then you can just see what's out there, you could see what are different ways that people are illustrating this particular topic, and then either get one that's a stock photo if you're lucky, you'll get a stock photo that these days you can license something for 10 or \$20.

Cliff Atkinson:

Or if not, another tip in this area is just to take something that you find on Google, and then if it's close to what you want, I've done this before, it was like an engine and showing the way that the liquids and so on and gasses flow through it, it wasn't quite right but then I just took what they had and then printed it out, and then I sketched on it what we really wanted. And then there's so many websites, there's one called Fiverr, with two Rs, fiverr.com or Upwork, and then I just post it on there, I found some illustrator, and I think it was maybe 10 or \$15, they took that, they created an original illustration for \$15 in a day. And then we used that in the case.

Cliff Atkinson:

So these days, I think that the price and the speed of getting these things done has just dropped dramatically. So I think something like that where you at least get something close to what you want, and then go to one of these sites and have somebody create it for you very inexpensively.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. I found that you could right-click and just download an image off of Google search, but a lot of time the resolution's not going to be what you want for a big screen. But all the stock photo sites are cheap, and like you said, I've also sometimes just... We have an in-house graphic artist, but I mean just, "Hey take this and make something with it." And it's amazing how easily they can do it.

Cliff Atkinson:

Well, and another thing is just your phone. Just go on site, if it's a car, go to the place and take your phone and take pictures of everything, just go... But that's another underutilized resource, is just taking a picture of something, even if it's a picture of something on your screen. There are many ways you might be able to visualize something, but if you just think of your camera and think of a way that I might

photograph something that illustrates that, then I think that that's also a great way to go to find something that's going to work.

Michael Cowen:

I did a super low tech, just telling war stories now, but I had a case where an 18-wheeler made an improper wide turn, and what I mean like he parked the car in the right lane of the frontage road of a big freeway, the 18-wheeler, went and talked in the store, came back in and he went to the left, went to the second lane, into the third lane, and then came back around to the right. And so the motorcycle that was coming just sees an 18-wheeler going from being parked to the right, to the second or third lane, thinks there he's going, and then he turned in front of him, unfortunately he got killed.

Michael Cowen:

And so I just had the reconstructionist to help me print, we just printed a photo of the scene and then we just printed the scale like a paper truck and a paper motorcycle.

Cliff Atkinson:

Oh, wow.

Michael Cowen:

And we just had him place where his truck was at each point. And so I had him take it, and I took a photo on my phone, I emailed myself, and then I had a \$200 portable color printer and I printed and marked them up. And so we had a step-by-step storyboard of the crash, which looks ridiculous for the defense, that the driver endorsed because it's where he put the paper. And it was cheap, I mean, I think I spent probably less than \$5 on this whole thing, it was probably 2 or 3, but it was really effective.

Cliff Atkinson:

Well, that is, yeah, I just want to point that out, that just what you did was just so creative and out of the box and interesting, and really that sort of thing just really works. And I think that that's an important thing, that we might be in a mind frame that has give it 3D generated reconstruction for 10,000, 15, 20,000 or more dollars, and that it's got to be super complex. But often, it's the simplest solution, the \$5 solution that will do the trick. And you can get it down quickly and it looks great and it's something that's memorable for the jurors. So especially these days, like I was mentioning, everything has dropped in cost and is faster to do, but also like you were just pointing out, the simplest solution may work better than something that's more polished.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. And on the other end, the 3D printing has all kinds of really new things we can do too when you want to create that object, that toy to hold. We've been able to do a lot of stuff with just taking a bunch of photos of something and there are people that use photogrammetry to create a 3D printed object.

Cliff Atkinson:

Oh, cool. I have not heard of that, yeah, that's awesome.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. So we had a roof crash case, product liability case, so we 3D printed the... It's just hard to tell from photos exactly what happened with the roof, and you have different angles and it looks different. So we just scanned the vehicle and we did an undamaged vehicle, 3D printed, and then a post crash, and you hold the two next to each other and you can say, "Yeah, that roof really..." Like in fact, let me since you've been showing toys-

Cliff Atkinson:

I was going to say, have you written about this anywhere or put it out on YouTube or something?

Michael Cowen:

I've not put it on... Let me just, I got to hold this up higher. So this is-

Cliff Atkinson:

Oh my God, that's amazing.

Michael Cowen:

... an undamaged roof and this is the damaged one that's pushed in a lot more, and especially here, if you were sitting here, you don't have any space to live, it comes all the way down. And this was probably eight years ago. They do much better, they can do multiple colors and better resolution and stuff nowadays. It's crazy now, and that's right for some cases, but my partner and I were getting ready for trial and one of the things we were talking about this morning is how do we show this? And that one, two toy vehicles and then a magnetic board with kind of block vehicles is going to make the most sense, as opposed to spending a bunch of money on animation because animations are really hard to proof millisecond by millisecond exactly where two people were, or two vehicles were. But you can explain the concept, which is what really matters, and not get drugged down in the irrelevant details sometimes with step-by-step photos or drawings or just two toys.

Cliff Atkinson:

Absolutely. Yeah, and it's just being able to hold it up and people can just so relate to that and see for themselves, and it's so powerful and it's really cool.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. I love the creative aspect of... It's one of the main reasons I love what we do.

Cliff Atkinson:

Well, I would say that too, that I would advocate that as a big thing to introduce, it if you haven't thought about that in your own firms, just generally to think about how it is you can foster creativity in your firm. This has been something in the business world for a while now where they talk about something that's called design thinking, and then there's a company called I-D-E-O, IDEO, that does product design but it's kind of known for creating these work spaces. You might've seen pictures, like what you see in an office and there are just toys and beanbags everywhere that it's just a colorful, playful space.

Cliff Atkinson:

And I would say that, that as you're running to introduce creativity out of the box thinking, doing really cool things like you do, think about a place in your firm if you've got an office or you're going back to your office, and then you're like, "We have a room that you could designate, this is your creative playpen. This area where you could keep those toys, you can keep all the red flags, you keep the bucket. When you go into this room, this is your place to blow your mind and do some really cool and interesting things." So really consider the value of doing that, because like we're talking about, the simple blue bucket or what you're doing are just so powerful and so valuable, I think it's really worth creating a space where that can happen.

Michael Cowen:

Absolutely. Also, my next question is how do we... I think so much as lawyers, we're scared, and so instead of being creative we find out, "Well what did so-and-so do in their last case?" Or, "So-and-so won a big case, I have to do what they did," and that might... Like Mark's incredibly masterful Vioxx opening might not work on my trucking case because it's a different story. And so what can we do to kind of get out, I mean, you gave the creative space, but any other ideas to get into that creative mindset to get out of, let's do what other people have done before and so let's find the best solution for this case?

Cliff Atkinson:

Well, and I love that as you're describing, it can be scary and I would say that the framing for this would be about fun and about creativity, and how is it... And I was describing Zoe and with Mark, I mean these folks are just having a blast doing this stuff. I saw Mark's Johnson & Johnson opening and it was just like he was just having a blast, he was describing all these tests and saying it's this concentration test that's like orange juice that concentrated, just really playful and fun and creative. And I think, as you might be able to frame it and say, I want the jurors to have fun and I'm going to have fun helping them to have fun.

Cliff Atkinson:

And so I think that maybe I would suggest trying out having a room, having a place where you've got this Google design thinking or IDEO or... And see how many companies are now creating these spaces that create more of a right brain or more of a creative, fun environment. So they're designed to take you out of your sitting at the desk in front of your laptop and dealing with the books and the text, and into more of a visceral experience where you're holding things up like the flag and you're feeling the flag. And I think that's so important because we're so far removed, often when you're presenting the case, it could be years removed from when it happened and you don't everything miss out on having the visceral part of communication. You're showing the best part, you're holding it up and you can feel it and you're wanting to really get the full range of experiences to really have that imprint on the jurors and the folks you're talking to.

Cliff Atkinson:

But just to back up, I would say though, all of these things, you really have to be open. There's got to be a place where you feel relaxed and you don't feel that fear or there's not a scared but rather, this is fun and comfortable and engaging. And the cool thing though about the plaintiffs' part and working with you all is that just how willing you all are to share all these cool things with each other.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. It's a great community.

Cliff Atkinson:

... give this stuff out to each other. So that's another thing too, just that we're not alone in this, that that what I just learned from you, that was super cool, I'm going to tell other people about that. But then Zoe, what she does with, she created it for this case and it had to do with some sort of gas seeping into a house and injuring some of the folks there. And she had a doll maker create a model of a house for \$200, and she actually brought that up, so she had fun in that way. Or Mark bringing in all of the tools that he brings in that that's another way, it's just to look for and see and learn from the examples of other folks who are doing really cool things like that.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah. I think the important thing is learn what you can from them and I'm going to go spend three days at Mark Lanier's Trial Academy next week, because he's a badass and he's incredible and I want to learn from him. But I can't use the exact same images he used for one trial in another trial necessarily, and maybe I can, maybe I can't. You have to go see, you can't just copy and I can't go there and imitate Mark Lanier. I can't go pretend to be Mark Lanier, I have to be me.

Cliff Atkinson:

That's exactly a wonderful point, that this has got to come from your own natural, your talents, your skills, we're all different. And it's got to come from where we are, otherwise it's going to be inauthentic and the jury's not going to believe it, right? You've got to do something that comes from you. But that's not to say that we can't stretch ourselves, so and me as a presenter too, I've gone out and gotten more toys and done more interesting things and tried things that are pushing my boundaries, like with these Zoom calls and talking just to a camera, this is all weird for me. But it's all about pushing your edge and learning new things, and having fun with it.

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Michael Cowen:

You did bring up a good topic I want to talk a little bit about which is Zoom. So in some places, they've been doing some Zoom trials. I'm personally hoping... I was all excited about it at first, I'm personally hoping that we go back to in-person because I think when I've seen the results of some of these Zoom trials, I think we are losing something from not being in-person. But we're going to have some, and we're definitely going to have Zoom hearing, Zoom depositions which are then going to be played at trial. How can we use these tools to tell a story over Zoom?

Cliff Atkinson:

Well, I think I would say that the leading edge takeaways in this whole department are to you can do little things that are going to get you an edge over at the other side. So simple things like improving the

quality of your camera, so moving, instead of the webcam you have built in, then get a nicer webcam, or instead of the built-in microphone and get another microphone. And then there's Zoom, but like right now with Zoom, I'm using a really good camera and a microphone, and then this is coming in through a software called Ecamm Live that is allowing me... I can actually put in video clips, I can put things over the screen, I can have text.

Cliff Atkinson:

So at a minimum, I think it's about upgrading the camera and the lighting and the microphone, at a bare minimum, and then as you might be exploring more, there are folks who are using more software tools like ManyCam, a lot of tools out there that are helping to take things to the next level. So I mentioned Zoe Littlepage, she just did a webinar for Trial Guides about many of the tools that you can use, having the background and green screen and all of these tools can be really helpful to improve the clarity of the communication over these tools. And I think that that's the most important thing, is looking at how it is you can gain an edge. Now this is new for everybody, for both sides, and I think that as we might be able to embrace some of the cool things that folks are doing that are working, that you can have an early advantage and the early first mover advantage.

Cliff Atkinson:

So if you look crisp and clear, it really enhances your visual credibility. I've talked about this, it's more like a looking all fuzzy and out of focus and maybe having a messy background is like wearing a bad suit, that this is, what's showing up in the screen is part of ethos, and Aristotle talked about, your visual credibility. And if everybody else is doing the same thing and you look crisp and clear and the sound is great, you're going to be miles ahead of the other side. So I think at a minimum, upgrading the equipment you have, and then as you've got that, then to start using some of these new tools that are out here that take things to the next level.

Cliff Atkinson:

Again, it's all new to all of us, so me included. So to me, it's just been the weirdest thing in this last year to talk to a camera. So right now, I'm talking to this camera and it's just so weird to do that, and especially if you're a lawyer, you're used to going and talking to jurors or talking and looking in people's faces. So even that is a skill to learn. How do I feel more comfortable imaging there's somebody I'm talking to and I'm just talking directly to this little machine in front of me, and making that feel like I'm authentic, how do you do that? And then we've talked a little bit about the technicalities of even doing a podcast, but then when you start going into this realm and using Zoom and using some of these other tools, it's almost like you're a TV producer when it used to be-

Michael Cowen:

Oh, absolutely.

Cliff Atkinson:

... then you would have a whole staff of people and it would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, now the downside is you're having to do a lot of the things that they did, but the upside is that the tools are easier to use and cheaper to use, and you can do some powerfully amazing things quickly and easily that would've cost all that before and now you can actually do a lot of it yourself. But it's all about that learning curve, that technology can be overwhelming, it could be difficult when you run into technical problems. I know this too, it's like, "Oh, my microphone's not working. I don't know why it's not, and I

have to do a call." So it just creates, it does add on stress, but at the same time is you might be able to master it.

Cliff Atkinson:

I know for me, I just feel a lot more comfortable and engaging and can reach more people because I now have the ability to use some of these tools just as the basic operating level.

Michael Cowen:

And it's the future. I mean, the fact is-

Cliff Atkinson:

It's the future.

Michael Cowen:

... while I think trials are going to go back to in-person, a lot of the depositions that end up being played at trial are going to be done virtually, because it doesn't make sense, you don't get that much better for flying around the country to take these depositions than you do to... Most of them are not so physically imposing that our mere presence gets someone to change the way they answer a question.

Cliff Atkinson:

Right.

Michael Cowen:

And as far as the presentation, through a share screen, through some of the tool, even just share screen but also through some of the tools that you mentioned, we actually have more power, more tools at our disposal to tell a visual story and the video if we use them, than if we're sitting in there with a videographer, because at best with a videographer, you get someone that has a split thing now, now split to this, now split to that, you're having to tell them what to do and he doesn't always figure it out because you're halfway around the country and you just met the person the morning before. And half the time, they don't bring the right equipment or it doesn't work right, and just...

Cliff Atkinson:

So I think with these new tools, a lot of that you're able to... The future is, you will be able to do a lot of that yourself. So it's just like the PowerPoint, it was hard to learn at first, and now a lot of folks are more comfortable with it. And even with this medium, so with the screen that I'm in right now with the tool I'm using called Ecamm, I can do a split screen where I'm on one half and they're on the other half. So you could do a deposition that way. But then also, you could switch over and then I could have the IP go on half of the screen.

Michael Cowen:

Yeah, which is fun.

Cliff Atkinson:

Yeah, that's fun. And then you could also, instead of just... I mean, I guess to your point, it actually could be more interesting if with these new tools, you could be writing on a tablet while they're talking and then so the jurors are not just seeing a face, but now they're seeing a face plus your hand writing what they're saying as they agree with what you're saying on that screen. So I think that obviously it's still early days. I think obviously the pandemic has forced us to really being in this new world 10 years earlier than we would've been, but I think that on the upside, we're all still learning all this stuff. But I think that some really cool and engaging things will come out of it, like you said, do you really need to fly all this way or can you do it virtually and then take that virtual format and then do something more interesting that you weren't even able to do in person before?

Michael Cowen:

That software is Ecamm, E-C-A-M?

Cliff Atkinson:

Yeah, and we can put that in the link too, E-C-A-M-M. That's probably the most sophisticated tool that allows you to do, like with the screen I'm in, I can do a split screen, I could put a video feed, I could do text on the screen. Some folks are using something called ManyCam, which is the next level from this tool, and then there's another one that's called Mmhhh, M-M-H-M-M. It's a brand new tool where with a green screen behind you, you can have documents, it can look like you're on Saturday Night Live with the little image behind you or have videos behind you. And that's a very easy to use and inexpensive tool.

Cliff Atkinson:

So again, I think we're in the new frontier of all this happening and there's lots of new tools out there. But I think we're on the beginning path of doing some really powerful and cool thing that I think will, just like PowerPoint has changed the way presentations happen in the courtroom, I think these tools will now be integrated every step of the way.

Cliff Atkinson:

Because one other point is that work recently with a client in California, and he was going to mediation, and he said that he had been frustrated because he would always send a write-up of the case, used to do write-ups and then he would spend all of this time and money on PowerPoints and send those but nobody would read them. And so what he decided to do was to create a video that he would send before that lays out the case. So a mini version of an opening, it's about an I think 10, 15 minute video. And he was actually able to do most of it himself. So he brought me in and we worked together on the story structure, but then he created the video and then just sent a link to the video so that all they had to do is just click and watch it in advance.

Cliff Atkinson:

So those are just innovations I think that we're starting to see, that there will be some really interesting and powerful things like that that kind of come out of all this change that's happening right now.

Michael Cowen:

Oh, that is so awesome. So you do some work with lawyers, what kind of work do you do with lawyers? And if we want to work with you, what are the options?

Cliff Atkinson:

Well, the main one has been to bring me in for a day and then as I mentioned, I fly in, work with the team, we do the first half of the story, story structure, theming, laying out the sequence of ideas. And then the afternoon, then we plug in all the documents and we're about 90% done with the opening by the end of that day with a PowerPoint or all these media elements. And then another thing that I'm developing now is actually an online training course. So I've got something called a visual storyteller school for lawyers, and that's teaching you all how to do this stuff yourself. And that one of the coolest things, I think for me, is that when I first started working with Mark in 2005, he was already a PowerPoint ninja. He already had such high technical skill, but it's so cool, a lot of folks at the time didn't have that knowledge but now, some of the folks who were most resistant to doing that or didn't want to do that are now actually building their own PowerPoints and doing some really powerful and cool things.

Cliff Atkinson:

And so what I'm aiming to do I think that online training is just to continue to help you learn these core skills with visual storytelling, with the structure and sequence of story, finding these visuals and now using Zoom, by doing those little mini mediation videos that I think the great power is that when you guys learn how to do this yourselves because just like that last client I mentioned, he was just so in... and you made a reference to it too, you're not dependent on a videographer to come in and do this or to, like you said, bring in a lot of equipment. You could actually do super powerful stuff yourself, and when you do that, you've got just the freedom that you could do things quickly, you could do things that cost... in a shorter amount of time with less money with a greater effect.

Cliff Atkinson:

So I think that that is really a trend that's happening as well, is that as you learn to do these things, you're actually freer, more nimble, have more strategic advantage because you actually can do it yourself.

Michael Cowen:

And I know we'll have this in the show notes, but for the people listening, if someone wants to get a hold of you to find you to see if you're the right fit to work with them on a case or to learn more, how do people find you?

Cliff Atkinson:

Just go to my website, it's my name, www.cliffatkinson.com. So you just go to that page, there's a link at the top that just says lawyers. And if you want more information about that training stuff, then you can just go into that link. But otherwise, just go to that website, my contact information is there, there's a sign up if you just want to keep updated on stuff that's coming up.

Michael Cowen:

Awesome. Well I am definitely inspired. I'm hoping to get to work with you in the near future, and thank you so much for coming on the show and sharing some of what you know.

Cliff Atkinson:

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Absolutely. Thank you so much for having me. It's such a pleasure and so glad to be able to reach the folks who are your listeners. And looking forward to working with you guys as well.

Outro:

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Commercial 3:

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