

# Lights, cameras, reaction!

## Cinematographer talks behind the scenes of Alton Police's lip syncing video

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ALTON – The day after a flash mob of cops, kids and community took over Third Street in Downtown Alton, a tired and happy cinematographer named Joe Moran discussed some of the work it took and people contributing to the effort with Riverbender.com.

That flash mob was a portion of a lip syncing video being put together by the Alton Police Department in the name of community relations. Many other police departments across the country have done videos of their officers lip syncing to popular songs. Alton Public Information Officer Emily Hejna said the trend started with one officer in his patrol car, and says it is a way to humanize police officers. Unlike many departments across the country, however, the Alton Police Department left their patrol cruisers and their station to go into the community they serve and protect.

Thursday night's flash mob was a sort of a climax for the video being shot by Moran, but Moran said the driving force behind it has been a conglomeration of several parties.

“The police department itself has really been directing this and taking the reigns,” Moran said. “It was a massive event. They called to block the street and set everything up. I wouldn't have even known who to call to get that done. I probably would have called them.”

Police officers joined with several members of the community who had been rehearsing a dance number with choreographer Tabi Young of DK Dance Productions. Both Moran and Hejna gave her the credit for the fun little number officers and people in the street were able to perform.

“She was great,” Moran said. “She even made a video tutorial of the dance for everyone to learn, which was extremely helpful.”

Young was also able to procure drone pilot Riq Dilly from St. Louis-based Convergence Media, who lent his skills for the cause when other drone pilots were not able to make it on such short notice. Moran said Dilly's contribution was essential for the video to be done right.

As of now, Moran said he has worked with the Alton Police Department since last Tuesday's noontime, and has realized a lot of things about the police.

“I went in with zero expectations,” Moran said. “They have been a blast to work with. They are each really unique people, and I have something to say about them all. Some of them want nothing to do with it, but the ones who want in on it go hard. They are in it to win it. They have all been real, fun and great, and I've had a great time working with them.”

Moran, Hejna and Alton Police Chief Jason Simmons have commented about the joy of filming throughout the city. Outside of the flash mob, filming has occurred at more than a dozen Alton locations, including small businesses like Duke's Bakery and Grand Piasa Body Art and Salon and public places like Downtown and the pedestrian bridge.

Final filming will take place Friday and Saturday during Chillin' with the Chief, another event sponsored by the Alton Police Department in the interest of community relations, during which Simmons will rent an ice cream truck and drive it to different locations in the city, including the Alton Boys and Girls Club, where another filming opportunity will be had.

For those not in the know, the Alton Police Department chose “Happy” by Pharrell Williams as their song to sync, and Hejna and Simmons both said they were “happy” with that decision.

Moran has volunteered his time, and operates a video service called “The Unseen Stars,” which helps bring notoriety to local businesses, services and individuals of note.