

Case Study



Sound mixer Sean O'Malley positioning the [Countryman B6 microphone](#) in the car .

Countryman Mics on the Set of MTV's "Punk'd"

B6 Omnidirectional Lavalier mic ideal for discreet audio capture

Los Angeles, CA – March 2012... MTV'S "Punk'd", airing March 29 at 10pm ET/PT, is a groundbreaking hidden camera series that features a different celebrity host each week playing complex, hilarious and fun punks on their famous friends. Whether it's on the set or out and about, some truly outrageous responses get documented. It's all in good fun, of course, and capturing these moments requires a variety of special equipment. That's precisely why the [B6 Omni .1-inch diameter lavalier microphone](#) from Menlo Park, CA-based Countryman Associates is on the scene.

Los Angeles-based Coffey Sound, a Trew Audio company, specializes in the sale and rental of audio equipment to the TV and film production community, provides a variety of equipment for use in the production of "Punk'd". Gary Vahling, the company's rental manager is involved in several capacities with the show, including consulting and system design. To ensure high quality sound acquisition, the audio package he specified includes eight Countryman B6 lavalier microphones. He described how the microphones are used.

"The B6 microphones are being used as 'surveillance' or 'plant' mics," Vahling explained. "They are frequently used on-set where, as an example, they are hidden among a plant or some other prop. They are also being used in vehicles. In these cases, the mic may be discreetly placed into the upholstery of the headliner—enabling location sound mixer Sean O'Malley to capture the target's dialog. We needed microphones that had excellent pickup characteristics that could easily be hidden and, for this type of work, the B6 is terrific."

When queried about those attributes that made the B6 best suited for this type of application, Vahling offered the following thoughts, "The Countryman B6 is really small and is available in several colors, so it can be easily hidden. Equally important, the caps can be swapped—enabling the mic's frequency response to be tailored to the situation. They exhibit very low noise and reject surrounding noise really well, and this makes it considerably easier to get the level that's required to pick up to sounds and reactions of the target. The end result is the fact that the B6 sounds great."

"This show uses some very sophisticated gear in order to manage the audio," Vahling continued, "so it was equally important that the microphones 'play nicely' with the other equipment. The B6's are interfaced with Lectrosonics wireless transmitters and receivers and we're also using an Opticore networked audio system for flexible signal routing and to tie the various equipment racks together. The combined result of these products has been really impressive."

This season's show has been in production since August and, as in seasons past, Vahling reports the Countryman microphones are remarkably robust—resulting in 'smooth sailing' for all involved. "The Countryman B6 is a great sounding, versatile mic that is built really well," Vahling says. "These mics get moved about a lot and much of the time, it's done quickly, so they naturally encounter some rough handling. We rarely experience issues with them and on those odd occasions when we do, it's good to know that Countryman's customer service is there to back us up. Countryman's service is always quick and courteous. Everyone at the company is very accommodating and shipping is consistently fast."

As he prepared for another day, Vahling offered this final thought on the use of the Countryman B6 microphones. "Everything is going really well," he says. "This show presents some really interesting audio challenges and the B6 does a great job capturing the spirit of the moment. These mics have been a great choice and I'm confident they will continue to deliver the goods. This is precisely why we specify Countryman."

For additional information about MTV'S "Punk'd", go to: <http://www.mtv.com/shows/punkd/series.jhtml>.