

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF OAKLAND

PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN,

Plaintiff,

Case No. 2022-279990-FH

HON. CHERYL A. MATTHEWS

v

JENNIFER LYNN CRUMBLEY,

Defendant.

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**SUPPLEMENT TO THE PEOPLE’S COMBINED RESPONSE AND BRIEF IN  
SUPPORT OF RESPONSE TO DEFENDANT’S MOTION TO REMOVE AND  
DISQUALIFY THE OAKLAND COUNTY PROSECUTOR AND HER OFFICE**

Court appointed appellate defense counsel, Michael Dezsí, filed the pending motion to disqualify the Prosecutor’s Office yesterday, the morning of March 5, 2025. Mr. Dezsí announced and then held a press conference yesterday at 2:00 p.m. After the People’s combined response and brief in support was filed, the Prosecution became aware of specific false misleading statements Mr. Dezsí made during his press conference. Those statements have been reported and repeated in the media, making this supplemental pleading necessary to bring that information to the Court in support of the People’s request for sanctions.

During the press conference, Mr. Dezsí repeated the false statement that crisis

communication firms were contracted in secret.<sup>1</sup> That is blatantly false.

The crisis communications firms were not hired in secret—they were known to every media outlet that covered the Oxford cases. The funds to pay them were allocated by the Board of Commissioners with the support of the County Executive, and their fees were paid by Oakland County, not the Prosecutor’s Office. None of that was secret. The work of the first firm was publicly reported almost three years ago—see Exhibit 1, Crains Business Detroit article from May 17, 2022. The retention of those crisis communications firms saved the taxpayers money when compared to the cost of a Public Information Officer (PIO)—those fees were less than half the cost of a full-time PIO.

Defendant’s motion and counsel’s public statements were intended to mislead the Court as well as the public. The People reaffirm their request for sanctions under MCR 1.109(E)(6).

Respectfully submitted,

KAREN D. McDONALD  
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

By:



Marc A. Keast (P69842)  
Assistant Prosecuting Attorney

DATED: MARCH 6, 2025

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<sup>1</sup> Quote from March 5, 2025 press conference of appointed appellate counsel Michael Dezsi:

“I really want to talk more about is the other way in which the Oakland County Prosecutor violated the rules of ethics. And she did so by using taxpayer funded public relations firms that were hired in secret by the Prosecutor’s Office.” And they hired the first one of those PR firms within hours of the shooting. Within hours of the shooting at Oxford, the Prosecution had already retained the first of the public relations firms by the name of Identity.” [press conference, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMn2xS4M3sk>, 6:37 / 32:28].

## **EXHIBIT ONE**



Real Estate

## Identity PR moves into smaller space with bigger goals

By Kirk Pinho



Credit: Courtesy of Identity PR

Identity PR leadership includes (from left) Erin Robinson, partner and vice president of account services; Andrea Conrad, director of creative operations and special projects; Mark Winter, founding partner and president; Andrea Trapani, managing partner; Elizabeth Strzalka, vice president of finance and operations; and Brandon Chesnutt, partner and vice president of digital strategy and development.

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May 17, 2022 06:00 AM

In the wake of the Oxford High School shooting late last year, the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office knew its staff couldn't handle the media onslaught that was sure to follow.

For a few days initially before being turned over to another firm, that barrage of media requests — hundreds or more from local, national and international media — was handled by Identity PR, a public relations firm that just moved to downtown Birmingham following the best growth year in the company's nearly 25-year history. Revenue grew 26 percent to \$6.5 million in 2021, the company said.

"If there's one thing we've learned about communications and the business of what we do, it's that clients were in a state of crisis and companies of all shapes and sizes were facing internal, external, a lot of communications chaos where they turn to us to lend a level of expertise and clarity," said Andrea Trapani, managing partner of Identity. "The

way that we were working changed, and certainly we saw an increased appetite in the market for what we do simply because our clients were looking for a level of clarity as the world was changing around them."

Founded in 1998 by Mark Winter, Identity has a staff of 30 and has more than 80 clients on retainer. The firm did work for about 120 clients in the last year, including one-off projects and crisis communications.

ADVERTISING



Since the first few days, communications work for Prosecutor Karen McDonald's office surrounding the Nov. 30 shooting has been handled by Detroit-based Moment Strategies LLC, the PR and communications firm started by Alexis Wiley, the former chief of staff to Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan and Fox 2 News reporter.

"Identity PR did a fantastic job," Wiley said. "One of the biggest challenges the prosecutor's office faced was managing a monumental case that Oakland County had never seen, while also having to navigate an onslaught of national and international media and managing the dignity and respect and balancing the respect that was due the families that have been so deeply impacted. They did a great job of setting an early framework."



During those few days, Identity says it worked with news organizations such as CNN, ABC News and the New York Times.

But the company's work goes well beyond local tragedy.

Identity worked on the announcement in January that Hudsonville Ice Cream was creating seven new Little Debbie flavors, work that Identity says got more than 1,050 media mentions with more than 2.1 billion impressions in not only local news outlets but also USA Today, People, Food & Wine, Southern Living, NBC, Fox Business and Yahoo!

It's also worked with baked goods wholesaler Bill Knapps, High Times magazine, luxury interior design company KSI, the Michigan Association of Justice, Absopure, the Motown Museum, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and La-Z-Boy.

Don Tanner, a founding partner of the Farmington Hills-based public relations firm Tanner Friedman, said Identity's Winter, who he described as a friend, "has always been very entrepreneurial."

"One of the things I noticed early on was they excelled in a number of areas, but one that stood out was building a real estate practice beyond this market. They had a real niche working with clients who weren't even based here and I found that pretty impressive," Tanner said. "They were also one of the first agencies to focus on social media."

Trapani said Identity's employee retention rate is an exception in an industry with high turnover. The average tenure at Identity is 5 1/2 years, Trapani said.

"We have people who are approaching the 20-year mark, like myself, and all of our leaders in the agency have been with the company for over a decade," she said.

As the company has grown, however — including adding 25 new clients last year — it has downsized its space as many others have done during the COVID-19 pandemic, moving from its longtime headquarters in Bingham Farms in about 8,200 square feet at 13 Mile and Telegraph roads to a 2,500-square-foot office in downtown Birmingham at 300 Park Ave.

"We determined after really taking stock from our personnel, listening to what they learned, listened to optimal working conditions, and also realizing that connection with our clients and being in the field and more collaborative — those were the things that prompted us to look at a new dynamic for the agency going forward," Trapani said.

The lease deal was brokered by Auburn Hills-based Team Core and the office space was built out by West Bloomfield Township-based Singh Management Co.

Other companies in the region have consolidated or downsized their office footprints during the 2-year-old pandemic as hybrid work models have remained prevalent.

For example, architecture and planning firm [HED is moving its Michigan office](#) from 36,000 square feet in the Beaumont Health headquarters building in Southfield to 19,000 square feet in the building at the corner of South Main and Fifth streets that used to house a Barnes & Noble Inc. bookstore in downtown Royal Oak. [Deloitte LLP shed several floors of office space](#) in the Renaissance Center and moved into WeWork space about one-third its previous footprint last month, and [Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan is leaving some of its space](#) in the RenCen, as well. Bank of America in Troy is [vacating its signature regional headquarters](#) on Big Beaver Road and dispersing its employees into three other Oakland County locations.

"When the world was really thrust into a new way of working, we were poised to do so just from our technology that we had already integrated into the agency, and we were poised to do so well," Trapani said.

"The reality was that it worked."

By Kirk Pinho

Kirk Pinho is a senior reporter covering commercial real estate. Since joining Crain's Detroit Business in 2013, he has written about leasing, development and property sales in Detroit and its suburbs, as well as the industry's trends, personalities and quirks.

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