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Electronically Filed
FIRST CIRCUIT
1CPC-24-0000150
23-AUG-2026
07:34 PM
Dkt. 479 MEO

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST CIRCUIT

STATE OF HAWAII

STATE OF HAWAII,	)	CASE NO. 1CPC-24-0000150
	)	
Plaintiff,	)	<u>COUNTS 1 AND 2: MURDER IN THE</u>
	)	SECOND DEGREE
VS.	)	<u>COUNTS 3 AND 4: KIDNAPPING</u>
	)	<u>COUNTS 5, 6 AND 7: CONSPIRACY TO</u>
	)	COMMIT KIDNAPPING
	)	<u>COUNTS 8 AND 9: UNLAWFUL</u>
BRANDY BLAS,	)	IMPRISONMENT IN THE FIRST
THOMAS BLAS SR.,	)	DEGREE
DEBRA GERON,	)	<u>COUNTS 10, 11 AND 12: CONSPIRACY</u>
	)	TO COMMIT UNLAWFUL
Defendants.	)	IMPRISONMENT IN THE FIRST
	)	DEGREE
	)	<u>COUNTS 13 AND 14: ENDANGERING</u>
	)	THE WELFARE OF A MINOR IN THE
	)	FIRST DEGREE
	)	<u>COUNTS 15 AND 16: HINDERING</u>
	)	PROSECUTION IN THE FIRST DEGREE
	)	<u>COUNT 17: ENDANGERING THE</u>
	)	WELFARE OF A MINOR IN THE
	)	SECOND DEGREE
	)	<u>COUNTS 18 AND 19: PERSISTENT</u>
	)	NONSUPPORT
	)	
	)	DEFENDANT BRANDY BLAS'S
	)	MEMORANDUM IN OPPOSITION TO
	)	NONPARTY PUBLIC FIRST LAW
	)	CENTER'S OBJECTION TO
	)	DEFENDANT BRANDY BLAS' SEALED
	)	MOTION TO SUPPRESS EXHIBITS [DKT.
	)	438-462, 464] AND REQUEST TO
	)	UNSEAL FILED JULY 10, 2026 (DKT.
	)	469); CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

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Oahu Publ'ns Inc. v. Ahn, 331 P.3d 460 (Haw. 2014); *Grube v. Trader*, 420 P.3d 343 (Haw. 2018).

And where immediate disclosure would undermine the interests asserted, Hawaii law permits temporary postponement rather than immediate full release. *Honolulu Advertiser, Inc. v. Takao*, 580 P.2d 58 (1978).

Accordingly, if the Court concludes some public access may ultimately be appropriate, the proper course is in camera review, temporary postponement, and redaction or partial unsealing only to the extent later found necessary.

II. Relevant Background

On December 31, 2025, Blas filed a motion to suppress evidence (Dkt. 291), and on June 5, 2026, she filed a supplemental declaration and memorandum in support of that motion (Dkt. 417). On July 3, 2026, defense counsel filed a declaration regarding Exhibits “A” through “G” to the supplemental declaration and stated that Blas was challenging four categories of search warrants: S.W. 2024-042; S.W. 2024-062 and S.W. 2024-063; S.W. 2024-048, S.W. 2024-075, and S.W. 2024-137; and S.W. 2024-125. Counsel further declared that true and correct copies of those warrants were attached as Exhibits A through G. Law Center’s July 10 objection identifies Dkt. 438 through 462, and 464, as the sealed motion-to-suppress exhibits it seeks to unseal.

The present sealing dispute follows the Court’s January 23, 2026 order (Dkt. 314) granting the State’s motion to unseal “Search Warrants and Search Warrant Affidavits and Attachments.” In support of that motion, Deputy Prosecuting Attorney (“DPA”) Erika K. Candelario declared that Detective Blake Davidson had prepared several search warrants, search warrant affidavits, and exhibits accompanied by ex parte motions for protective or nondisclosure orders and/or ex parte motions to seal. She further declared that the State sought unsealing because it needed to provide

copies of the search warrants, affidavits, and attached exhibits as discovery and to respond to the defense suppression motions. The same declaration also requested that, other than for discovery, those materials remain sealed from the public because they contained “personal confidential information,” specifically “minor names, birthdates, photos of minors, and medical information related to minors.” The Court’s order filed January 23, 2026 (Dkt. 314) then granted the motion and directed that the requested search warrants, affidavits, and records be submitted to the DPA or her designee.

Defense counsel’s July 3 declaration (Dkt. 437) expressly relied on that prior unsealing order. Counsel stated that the seven warrants had been unsealed so that the prosecuting attorney’s office could obtain the materials and tender them to the defense, but that “[i]t does not appear that further dissemination was intended or permitted.” Counsel therefore filed the search-warrant exhibits under seal pursuant to Hawaii Court Records Rules 2.20 and 9.

On July 10, 2026, Law Center filed Dkt. 469, titled “Nonparty Public First Law Center’s Objection to Defendant Brandy Blas’ Sealed Motion to Suppress Exhibits [Dkt. 438-462, 464] and Request to Unseal.” Its objection is directed at the sealed search-warrant exhibits filed in support of Blas’s suppression motion.

III. Argument

A. Law Center’s procedural objection does not entitle it to immediate blanket unsealing.

Law Center argues that Blas filed the search-warrant exhibits under seal without prior notice and without findings sufficient to satisfy Hawaii’s access cases. Even if the Court applies that framework now, the remedy is not automatic full release of every sealed exhibit. Under *Oahu Publ’ns Inc. v. Ahn*, 331 P.3d 460 (Haw. 2014) and *Grube v. Trader*, 420 P.3d 343 (Haw. 2018), the Court

must make specific findings and consider narrower alternatives before ordering disclosure. That analysis supports a tailored ruling after notice and hearing, not wholesale unsealing by default.

B. The warrant materials implicate concrete privacy interests that Law Center’s blanket request does not resolve.

Law Center argues that Hawaii Court Records Rules (“HCRR”) Rule 9 does not authorize blanket sealing of evidence, while also stating that it has no objection to protecting personal information through redaction. The State’s January 2026 declaration, however, specifically represented that the search warrants, affidavits, and attached exhibits contained “minor names, birthdates, photos of minors, and medical information related to minors,” and it asked that those materials remain sealed from the public except for discovery purposes.

In *Oahu Publications Inc. v. Takase*, 386 P.3d 873 (Haw. 2016), the Hawaii Supreme Court held that when filed materials contain protected personal information, the court may promptly seal them and require a redacted public version because any sealing must be no broader than reasonably necessary. At minimum, this case therefore calls for review and redaction, not immediate full unsealing of the warrant materials.

C. The January 23, 2026 order allowed limited party access for litigation; it did not authorize unrestricted public dissemination.

Law Center argues that the January 23, 2026 order does not justify continued sealing and that search-warrant secrecy is no longer required because Blas has been indicted, obtained the materials, and moved to suppress based on them. But the State’s motion to unseal was expressly tied to discovery and suppression litigation. The supporting declaration stated that the prosecution needed access to provide the search-warrant materials in discovery and respond to the suppression motions, while also requesting that, other than for discovery, the search warrants, affidavits, and attached

exhibits remain sealed from the public because they contained confidential information.

The resulting order granted the State's motion and directed that the requested search warrants, affidavits, and records be submitted to the DPA or her designee. Defense counsel later declared that the warrants were unsealed pursuant to that order so the prosecution could obtain them and tender them to the defense, and that "[i]t does not appear that further dissemination was intended or permitted." Thus, prior party access for litigation purposes did not convert the warrant exhibits into materials that must now be publicly released in full.

D. The public-access interest can be protected through in camera review, redaction, and partial unsealing rather than full release of every exhibit.

Law Center asks the Court to unseal Dkt. 438 through 462, and 464, in full and contends that a defendant should not litigate suppression using "secret evidence." Hawaii law does not require an all-or-nothing choice. *Ahn*, *Grube* and *Takase* all reject generalized assertions and require a specific connection between disclosure and harm. There should be findings addressing alternatives to complete sealing or complete disclosure. And, where confidential personal information appears in filed materials, prompt sealing is required, followed by expeditious redaction.

The sealed suppression exhibits here are not a single short filing. Counsel identified seven separate warrants challenged on different theories, including a predicate warrant, follow-up electronic warrants, Apple and Google warrants, and a CWS warrant. That record is especially ill-suited to blanket relief. If the Court determines that some public access is appropriate, the narrower course is in camera review, redaction of minor names, birthdates, photographs, medical information, and similar protected matter, and partial unsealing only of those pages or excerpts the Court concludes are necessary for public understanding of the suppression issues before it.

As discussed above, Hawaii law permits temporary postponement of public access to judicial materials, rather than immediate wholesale release, when contemporaneous disclosure would threaten fair-trial or other compelling interests and narrower alternatives must first be evaluated.

Here, the State previously represented that the search warrants, search-warrant affidavits, and attachments contained minor names, birthdates, photos of minors, and medical information related to minors, and it asked that, other than for discovery, those materials remain sealed to the public. Under that framework, if the Court concludes that some public access to these warrant exhibits may later be required, the proper course is to delay release pending in camera review and then require redaction or partial unsealing only to the extent narrower disclosure will adequately protect the competing interests.

E. Law Center overstates the need for immediate wholesale access to the warrant exhibits.

Law Center argues that Blas cannot litigate suppression based on “secret evidence” and seeks unsealing of the search-warrant exhibits supporting the suppression motion. But the public record already identifies the categories of warrants at issue: S.W. 2024-042; S.W. 2024-062 and S.W. 2024-063; S.W. 2024-048, S.W. 2024-075, and S.W. 2024-137; and S.W. 2024-125. The public can therefore understand the structure of the suppression dispute without immediate disclosure of the unredacted warrants, affidavits, and attachments.

F. The record reflects specific privacy concerns in the warrant materials, not merely generalized secrecy.

The January 13, 2026 declaration supporting the State’s motion to unseal for discovery stated that Detective Blake Davidson had prepared multiple search warrants, affidavits, and exhibits during the investigation, that the State needed those materials to provide discovery and respond to

suppression motions, and that the materials should otherwise remain sealed to the public because they contained minor names, birthdates, photos of minors, and medical information related to minors. The January 23, 2026 order then granted the motion to unseal and directed that the requested search warrants, affidavits, and records be submitted to the DPA or her designee. Defense counsel later declared that the warrants were unsealed so the prosecution could obtain them and tender them to the defense, but that further dissemination did not appear intended or permitted.

That history does not establish a right to perpetual blanket sealing. It does, however, support continued court supervision over the timing and manner of any public release.

G. If any access is later ordered, it should follow in camera review and document-by-document redaction, not immediate full unsealing.

Law Center itself states that it has no objection to protecting personal information through redaction. That concession underscores that the real dispute is not whether sensitive material exists, but whether the Court should order immediate wholesale disclosure before reviewing what each warrant exhibit actually contains.

Hawaii's access cases require the Court to consider alternatives to full sealing and to make specific, record-based findings before denying or allowing access. Applied here, that means the Court may review the warrant exhibits in camera, determine whether particular affidavits or attachments contain protected minor, medical, or similarly sensitive information, and require redacted versions or limited excerpts rather than order blanket unsealing now. If, after that review, the Court determines that public access should extend further, release can occur once the reasons for temporary protection are no longer viable.

IV. Requested Relief

For the foregoing reasons, Defendant Brandy Blas respectfully requests that the Court:

1. Deny and overrule Nonparty Public First Law Center's July 10, 2026 objection and request to unseal Dkt. 438 through 462, and Dkt. 464.
2. Keep under seal the search-warrant exhibits, including the warrants and related materials filed as Exhibits "A" through "G" in support of Defendant's suppression litigation.
3. Find that the January 23, 2026 unsealing order permitted access to those materials for party discovery and litigation use, but did not require immediate public dissemination of the same warrant materials.
4. In the alternative, if the Court determines that some public access may ultimately be appropriate, temporarily postpone any public release of the search-warrant exhibits until trial or further order of the Court, after the fair-trial and privacy concerns justifying continued protection are no longer viable.
5. Before ordering any release, conduct or permit record-specific review and require submission of proposed redactions, so that only those portions, if any, that can be disclosed without harming the protected interests are made public.
6. If any disclosure is later ordered, limit it to redacted or partially unsealed portions of the search-warrant materials actually necessary to permit public understanding of the issues and the Court's ruling, rather than wholesale unsealing.
7. Grant such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

DATED: Honolulu, Hawaii, August 23, 2026.

/s/ Harrison L. Kiehm
HARRISON L. KIEHM
Attorney for Defendant
BRANDY BLAS

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST CIRCUIT

STATE OF HAWAII

STATE OF HAWAII,	)	CASE NO. 1CPC-24-0000150
	)	
Plaintiff,	)	
	)	CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE
vs.	)	
	)	
BRANDY BLAS,	)	
THOMAS BLAS SR.,	)	
DEBRA GERON,	)	
	)	
Defendants.	)	
	)	
	)	
	)	
	)	

I hereby certify that upon the date of filing, the foregoing memorandum in opposition will be served on the following by electronic mail and USPS postage prepaid. JEFS users will be served by electronic filing generated by JEFS.

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PUBLIC FIRST LAW CENTER

DATED: Honolulu, Hawaii, August 23, 2026.

/s/ Harrison L. Kiehm
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BRANDY BLAS