



April 6, 2021

OPEN LETTER TO GANNETT & USA TODAY LEADERSHIP

Dear Mr. Dickey and Ms. Wadsworth,

I'm writing to request an explanation as to why your organization has chosen to censor email communications from my company's domain, phillymadecreative.com. For months, my partner, Matt, has been emailing with journalists who report for numerous of your local market outlets. Hundreds of your team members were regularly reading his independent research and tips. The numbers don't lie.

However, this morning we shockingly discovered that someone(s) within your team executed a censorship campaign by blocking our communications from journalists that trust you. Blocking your reporters from and, by proxy, covering up known issues of human trafficking, election mail-in ballot mishandling, national barratry crimes, and more.

These are issues that impact real people's lives every day. People who continue to be ignored, who's problems you suggest don't matter. These people deserve your attention, given your responsibility to "give a voice to the voiceless." There were people trafficked in and out of Philadelphia last year, out in the open, and our local press covered it up. Nobody within your organization had the courage to track down a single lead we provided despite ample evidence.

Instead, you have censored our boutique media company without warning, and for no reason. While this may be common practice with social media channels, the press in America has an obligation to receive tips and stories from the public. If you simply block people you disagree with, regardless of the evidence, you are refusing to be the free press.

You cannot make us, these issues, or the people they impact invisible. It's highly doubtful that we're the only people that you have done this to. Who else have you censored with the push of a button?

If you believe that our domain was accidentally blocked from thousands of your employees across dozens of news websites that you all happen to own, we would be happy to have a discussion about how to correct it. Until then, your dark shadow tactics will shine bright in our light.

Luminously yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristen Berman".

Kristen Berman
Owner & CEO, Philly Made Creative