

# Britt Cramer



Kirkland & Ellis LLP's Britt Cramer secured a record \$19.3 million civil verdict for deprivation of rights for a pro bono Jane Doe client who was repeatedly raped and abused by a counselor at an Illinois prison where she was housed, earning a spot among the trial attorneys under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

## Her biggest case:

Cramer joined the plaintiff's legal team in the case known as Doe v. Macleod et al. in 2021 after discovery closed. She said it was the first case where she was lead attorney and staffed a team of "passionate female attorneys."

"I was the trial lead of that case; that was really the first case that was sort of my baby from a trial perspective," Cramer said.

Doe had been housed at Illinois' Logan Correctional Center and was abused by her prison counselor; the prison's warden and lead investigator were also named as defendants in the suit due to being aware of the conduct but doing nothing.

According to Cramer, Doe brought the case after completing her sentence at Logan. The \$19.3 million

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*"I have a little theater kid energy in me. [My motivation] is a combination of wanting to do work where you're working with smart people and getting an opportunity to tell a story."*

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verdict awarded in September is, according to the firm, the largest ever under the civil deprivation of rights statute for a sexual assault case, with the average award being around \$12,000, the firm said.

The graphic nature of the allegations was a tricky issue for the trial team, Cramer said. Some jurors had had their own experiences with sexual coercion or sexual assault, and Cramer's team put together a specialized juror questionnaire during jury selection.

"In order to accurately and vigorously represent our client, we had to go into some pretty stark and gruesome details," Cramer said. "Trying to navigate that line of, we want to be factual, but we also want to be sensitive. We don't ever want to do anything that seems gratuitous."

The case was "emotionally trying" for Cramer and her team, she said, adding that "I think every one of the jurors cried during my closing statement."

## What drew her to trial practice:

Cramer said she was drawn to Kirkland in part because she wasn't sure exactly what type of litigator she wanted to be, and the firm allows attorneys to shop around for a specialty or pursue careers as a generalist, she added.

One of the first cases she was assigned to was a product liability trial that was starting "imminently," and the team was beginning to develop opening statements. Cramer said she was "really thrown into the deep end."

"The thing I really liked for trial was how much of a team sport it is and how you have to boil down all of these issues in a way that's interesting and understandable," Cramer said.

After spending months or years familiarizing herself with the technical aspects of a case, Cramer said she enjoys the interactive challenge with other attorneys of trying to make details digestible to a jury of laypersons who will only spend a short time considering them.

## How she thinks the legal industry will change over the next 10 years:

Cramer said she believes technology will take a role in evolving trial practice over the next 10 years.

"There's been a lot of talk lately about deepfakes and evidence that is fabricated," Cramer said. "I think that's going to be something we figure out."

With current technology around metadata, attorneys and law

enforcement can deduce how digital evidence was produced and who handled it along the way, she said. But as technology evolves and becomes more powerful, she added that future lawyers could be tasked with a heightened expectation to authenticate documents.

## What motivates her:

Cramer described herself as a very curious person who enjoys working with "smart people on difficult questions" and that serves as a motivator for her at work.

"I think I have a little theater kid energy in me," she said. "It's a combination of wanting to do that work where you're working with smart people and getting an opportunity to tell a story."

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