

A Fully Baked Defense

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Having your say can have an important impact even if you don't know about it. Sometimes the people on the front lines are paying surprisingly close attention to what you say.

William Jacobson of the Legal Insurrection blog has learned how important his posts and the comments of readers have been to the legal team fighting for Gibson's Bakery.

Gibson's, you may remember, is the shop in Oberlin, Ohio, that Oberlin College tried to

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clobber because an employee of the bakery confronted shoplifters. Because the thieves were black, race-conscious student activists erupted in outrage — at the bakery, not against the shoplifters — and college officials echoed the students' irrational hostility and smears.

Long story short, Gibson's sued for damages and spent years in court to first win a



substantial judgment, then to fight Oberlin's appeals.

In a recent interview with Professor Jacobson, Lee Plakas, lead trial attorney for the bakery, told him how important Jacobson's blog has been to the legal team.

They clicked in daily.

“Your readers gave the family the support and the courage that they needed to persevere,” Plakas said. “We had a billion-dollar bully doing everything they possibly could to destroy this iconic bakery. . . . And we wanted to make sure that in this battle that we didn't miss any nuance that one of your readers or Professor Jacobson may have identified. So we could incorporate it into our presentation.”

The result? Oberlin College finally agreed to pay the damages: \$36.59 million.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.