

Half a Win Is Better than None

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Jennifer Anderson criticized her local sheriff. Her family's home was raided in 2016 by the sheriff as a result.

Terrebonne Parish Sheriff Jerry Larpenter's reaction to criticism was ugly and unconscionable, but it hasn't been allowed to stand. On the other hand, the sheriff hasn't been adequately punished, either.

Jennifer Anderson's pseudonymous blog ExposeDAT criticized various public figures

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in Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana, including with respect to the business relationships between Larpenter and others. Bridling at the criticism — which had to do with assessment of publicly available facts — the sheriff submitted warrants to Facebook



and AT&T to track down the identity of the blogger. Then he sent men to raid the Andersons' home and grab computers and cell phones.

The Andersons fought back, suing in federal court. They wanted the raid and seizure and search of their private stuff to be declared unconstitutional.

Finally, this September, the Andersons reached an undisclosed settlement with Larpenter out of court. According to its terms, the Andersons aren't allowed to discuss it any detail. But their attorney says the settlement is "a victory for citizens' right to be critical of their elected officials without fear of retribution." U.S. District Court Judge Lance Africk has said that "Jennifer Anderson's speech [in her blog] falls squarely within the four corners of the First Amendment."

All that's fine, but why hasn't this sheriff also at least been kicked out of his job for his blatant abuse of power?

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.