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## SILENCE OF THE LAMBS

# Vegan Professor at War With College to Save 9 Baby Lambs From Slaughter

“Everyone is just focused on keeping these nine souls out of the slaughterhouse,” said David Nibert, a sociology professor who has spent months campaigning for their release.

Olivia Messer Updated 08.24.19 12:18PM ET  
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Photo Illustration by The Daily Beast/Youtube

Like any good story, this one begins on an early spring day in a peaceful meadow full of

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Dr. David Nibert, a sociology professor at Wittenberg University, stumbled upon the lambs in May, while strolling near the campus of Antioch College, a private liberal arts school in the western Ohio town of Yellow Springs.

“You know what it’s like when you see a puppy who’s lost, or a baby kitten? Who knows what happened to them, and they’re without their mothers,” said Nibert. “I just sat down and spent some time with them—these gentle, innocent animals.”

Then, to his horror, Nibert discovered that his new friends were destined for the slaughterhouse.

And so, an idea was born.

“I thought: ‘I need to become an advocate for these lambs,’” he told The Daily Beast on Friday.

Nibert, who lives across the street from Antioch’s president, reached out to try

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Food for the community is grown on the farm, where the school said students can also get practical experience in sustainable and ecologically appropriate agriculture, [Cleveland.com](#) reported. All of the farm's products, including vegetables, fruits, herbs, chickens, and ducks, reportedly go toward feeding students in the dining hall, which sits fewer than 2,000 feet away.

Even still, Nibert said he “thought for sure that Antioch will see clearly that they need to release them for sanctuary.”

“I said I’d even be willing to compensate them for the lambs,” he added.

“*It’s a shame  
that one of  
the most  
progressive*

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*the history of  
the United  
States is also  
now involved  
in the raising  
and killing of  
animals.”*

— Dr. David Nibert

But Nibert was rebuffed. In a letter sent to Nibert on July 3 by Antioch College President Tom Manley, which was reviewed by The Daily Beast, Manley thanked him for “giving thought” to the school but said they had decided to stick with the plan to kill the lambs for food.

“Antioch’s practices reflect a thoughtful, integrative approach to environmental and ecosystem management and have been recognized for doing so nationally,” Manley wrote.

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“They seek to educate by offering pragmatic, knowledge-based solutions to the daunting global challenges we face with regard to developing and sustaining healthy food systems. They support a reasonable range of personal dietary preferences in our kitchens and they respect the right of individuals to make choices for themselves from what is offered, including seasonally, meat from the sheep (and chickens and ducks) that are kept on the farm,” Manley added.

He continued: “On the matter of the sheep, at this point I have made the college’s position clear and will have nothing further to offer in response.”

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But Nibert, who promotes abolitionist veganism, wasn't giving up that easily. This wasn't his first animal rights rodeo. The professor has written about the subject at length, including in his 2002 book *Animal Rights/Human Rights*, his 2013 book *Animal Oppression and Human Violence*, and his 2017 book *Animal Oppression and Capitalism*.

Once Nibert's idea was refused by the school's president, he took to the streets.

Nibert posted fliers and began speaking to students and alumni. Though he was garnering increased support for his cause, Nibert received a cease-and-desist order on July 22—which was reviewed by The Daily Beast—from Antioch College that called his fliers a “nuisance” and asked him to stop posting them on campus.

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an ad in the local newspaper,  
which was reportedly signed  
by more than 100 scholars,  
asking that the school  
consider sparing the animals'  
lives.

One of Nibert's supporters,  
Corey Wrenn—chair of the  
Animals & Society Section of  
the American Sociological  
Association—wrote a letter to  
the Yellow Springs News  
calling the college's rationale  
for raising and slaughtering  
the lambs “deeply  
problematic and, frankly,  
uninformed.”

“With climate change at crisis  
levels, it is frankly laughable  
that the university would  
suggest that animal  
agriculture is in any way  
compatible with goals of  
sustainability,” Wrenn wrote.  
“The science simply does not  
support such a claim.”

“Lambs are not things, they  
are not tools, and they are not  
food,” she continued. “They  
are persons who care about  
what happens to them, just  
like us.”

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more than 7,000 signatures.

“The college is using the lambs as ‘living lawnmowers’ in a field of solar panels, but later this summer the college will kill the lambs and feed them to students,” Nibert’s petition stated. “The use and impending death of the lambs is hailed by the college as a lesson in the production of ‘real’ food.”

“But the lambs are not carrots and turnips,” Nibert wrote.

Several people who signed the petition offered to re-home the lambs; others expressed varying degrees of outrage.

One supporter wrote:  
“IGNORANT  
UNCOMPROMISING  
COLLEGE!! YOU NEED TO  
LEARN SOME  
COMPASSION &  
FLEXIBILITY . TOTALLY  
NO NEED TO HAVE THESE  
LAMBS SLAUGHTERED !  
POOR EXAMPLE TO YOUR  
STUDENTS ...VIOLENCE!”

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*Just focus on keeping  
these nine  
souls out of  
the  
slaughterhouse.”*

— Dr. David Nibert

“Is this how you teach students about compassion?” asked another person. “No wonder why there are so many school shootings in this country. Lambs are actually not food. They are living, emotional, sentient beings who feel pain.”

“It’s 2019,” wrote another supporter. “Wake up.”

But the college has accused the professor and his supporters, in their efforts to free the lambs, of using an overwhelming campaign of social media, phone calls, and emails to force them to acquiesce to a set of strict ethical guidelines

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school disputes Nibert's timeline of events.

"We first became aware of Dr. Nibert's position in late May when the local newspaper published a letter he penned to the editor," the spokesman told The Daily Beast.

"Dr. Nibert's message is 'we want you to do what we say you should do,' disallowing our ability to think for ourselves and for students to make their own ethical decisions," he said, in an email. "Unfortunately the tactics used in this instance—which have not fully acknowledged the complete facts around our progressive programs—have incited hateful rhetoric and harassment of employees and students from outside of the area."

"Antioch College's campus practices are based on scientific inquiry and best practices, not opinions," said the spokesman. "Eating less meat or no meat is not the

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country and around the world of responsible, sustainable, and humane animal husbandry. Unless the eating of meat is altogether in question, Antioch College's practices are on the leading edge."

But the anger, Nibert said, came from both sides. The professor claimed he's been attacked by people in the town of Yellow Springs, who have "mocked" and "ridiculed" him at the alleged urging of Antioch College.

"I'm not aggressive," said Nibert, who told The Daily Beast he was surprised at the alleged vitriol directed at him personally. "I've always been polite and respectful of people."

"First and foremost, everyone is just focused on keeping these nine souls out of the slaughterhouse," he said.

"It's a shame that one of the most progressive colleges probably in the history of the United States is also now

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time, the state of these nine

lambs is very important.”

“If we can’t get Antioch  
College to recognize that this  
is wrong, it’s bad for the  
world,” he added.

**Olivia Messer**

Reporter

@OliviaMesser

olivia.messer@thedailybeast.com

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# *The Secret Story of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid Tango*

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