

The Boston Globe

EDITORIAL

Upper Crust pizza case now topped with poetic justice

DECEMBER 20, 2012

It's a real-life twist of fate so delicious not even a Hollywood writer could have crafted it better: After years of legal sparring with Jordan Tobins, founder of the embattled local pizza chain Upper Crust, former employees of the bankrupt company are now poised to take over the restaurant's Harvard Square outpost. It's a long way from 2009, when the company was compelled by the US Department of Labor to pay workers around \$350,000 in back wages. Employees later maintained in a class-action suit, which is expected to go to trial next summer, that company executives had pressured them to give the payments back.

The plan of redemption was engineered by Shannon Liss-Riordan, the attorney who represented the employees in their lawsuits against the company. Along with another investor, Liss-Riordan outbid Tobins and other interested parties to take control of the Cambridge restaurant at an auction this week. She has already announced her intentions to offer ownership shares to the chain's former employees.

Hopefully, the good news doesn't end there. Liss-Riordan hopes to transform the restaurant into a "model workplace for the benefit of workers." If she can pull that off, the story won't just be a feel-good tale fit for the silver screen, but a textbook model of how a company can churn out a profit that benefits all of its employees — while making a killer pie, as well.