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\$1M COMEBACK AFTER HARASS

By AUSTIN FENNER

A Manhattan executive who won \$1.2 million in a sex-harass suit after male co-workers allegedly pawed her is returning to her old job today — even as the boss vows to appeal the verdict.

Sydney Nurse, 43, says she's not a glutton for punishment — just principled.

"I don't need [co-workers] to be friendly with me, I need them to respect me," said Nurse, who is comptroller at the Midtown head-hunting firm Concepts in Staffing and earns a \$100,000-plus salary.

Nurse won her civil suit against the company last month in which she charged that she worked in a sexist environment,



SYDNEY NURSE

Returns to exec job today.

was groped and repeatedly called a "black bitch."

"I was extremely depressed. It made me question my self-esteem," she said.

Nurse said her complaints to the company's

owner, Arthur Abrams, 71, fell on deaf ears. She charged that Abrams himself once pushed his groin against her body as she was bending to retrieve papers from a cabinet.

Nurse said she realizes it will be an uphill battle continuing to work daily with Abrams.

"I'm concerned about it," Nurse said. "I'm also concerned about how I will be received. Many people didn't want me to bring these charges."

Abrams' lawyer, Mercedes Colwin, said the company plans to fight the court award of \$1.2 million plus legal fees.

"We continue to deny these allegations. They were refuted at trial," Colwin said. "This is a woman who is respected at the

company. She had a meteoric rise. [Her promotion] belies any discrimination or sexual harassment."

Nurse agrees that she was successful.

"I built the department. When I came here the accounting department was in disarray," she said.

She said she feels obligated to return because of her female colleagues.

"I was afraid to report it [harassment]. I wondered if people would believe me," she said. "I feel responsible to them as well."

Nurse's lawyer, Ken Thompson, told The Post, "We are hoping that the verdict will change the environment at the company, because if the verdict doesn't bring the change, what will?"

austin.fenner@nypost.com