

# Pilot is awarded \$875,000 in sexual-harassment suit

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NEWARK, N.J. — A federal jury yesterday ordered Continental Airlines to pay \$875,000 to a female pilot who was offended by her male colleagues' practice of leaving dirty pictures in the cockpit.

The jury ruled that the photos constituted sexual harassment because they created a hostile environment.

Robin Curtis, the airline's top labor lawyer, said it would appeal.

The jury declined to make the Houston-based airline pay punitive damages and found that Continental had not retaliated or sexually discriminated against Capt. Tammy Blakey in pay or assignment.

"I'm not disappointed," said Blakey, 38, of Arlington, Wash. "The money

wasn't as important as the message."

The case exposed the tradition among male airline pilots of leaving surprises in the cockpit for the next crew: lewd pictures slipped into flight manuals, hidden behind equipment panels and pasted in drawers.

Blakey's lawyers had presented evidence that she has lost about \$400,000 since going on unpaid leave in 1993 after filing her lawsuit. They did not ask for a specific amount in punitive damages.

The jury said Blakey should get \$495,000 for lost pay, plus \$500,000 for emotional distress, pain and suffering. But it deducted \$120,000, finding that Blakey could have handled things differently.

Blakey said she was ready to return to work but admitted being a bit apprehensive.



"The money wasn't as important as the message," Continental Airlines pilot Capt. Tammy Blakey said of yesterday's ruling.

Blakey, who was based at Continental's Newark, N.J., hub, testified she repeatedly complained to her supervisors about pornographic pictures in cockpits, as well as other affronts, such as being repeatedly locked out of the computer system.

Among the indignities: Male pilots scrawled her name on graphic photos.

Continental maintained that Blakey's complaints began only after her schedule changed in 1991 for seniority reasons and after the airline raised concerns about how many days she had missed.

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