

## City pays \$500K to settle case with 'Lipstick Bandit' Serena Reaves-Cain's accusers

**Welfare office boss allegedly kissed and groped her employees**

BY [BARBARA ROSS](#) AND [TRACY CONNOR](#) / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

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ENID ALVAREZ/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

The "Lipstick Bandit" has cost taxpayers another \$500,000.

The city has settled a second lawsuit filed by welfare-office workers who alleged they were sexually harassed by a smooching supervisor, the Daily News has learned.

[Serena Reaves-Cain](#), 52, was canned in 2009, but the city is still paying the price for not giving her the kiss-off earlier.

One of two accusers to split the latest settlement said superiors ignored complaints about her kissing, groping boss — who got her nickname for leaving lipstick marks on one underling.

"It's bad enough when a man is touching you. At least you know what that's about. When it's a woman, you don't expect it," said the worker, who asked that her name be withheld because she's still embarrassed by the episode.

"She grabbed me, kissed me behind the neck. It's not a comfortable feeling. It still bothers me when I think about it."

She said that between 2002 and 2005, she repeatedly complained to higher-ups and even filed a formal complaint with human resources.

"The woman who took my report called me and said she'd investigated what I'd said and found nothing. It turned out that she'd never called anyone at the agency," the employee said.

Three other women who filed a federal lawsuit against Reaves-Cain told similar tales of harassment, revealing she had proposed creating a calendar of scantily clad female workers.

The city settled that suit for \$400,000.

The second suit, filed in state court, resulted in a bigger payout because it came after internal hearings that

resulted in Reaves-Cain being fired, said lawyer [Derek Smith](#).

"The city needs to take complaints more seriously," Smith said.

Reaves-Cain could not be reached for comment, but she denied the allegations in the past, claiming the scandal was trumped up because she was a tough boss.

[Connie Pankratz](#), a spokeswoman for the city Corporation Counsel's office, said, "We believe the settlement was in the best interest of all parties."

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