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## SEX ABUSE CASE: Cornwall police face probe; Case dropped after church paid victim

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CORNWALL -- Ottawa police have been asked to investigate a Cornwall police case that concluded without charges after a Roman Catholic archdiocese gave a sex-abuse complainant about \$30,000.

A man, now 35, complained to Cornwall police in December 1992 that he had been sexually assaulted by a local Catholic priest about 20 years ago when he was an altar boy.

But in September 1993, the man told the Cornwall force to drop the investigation because he had reached a civil settlement with the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Cornwall-Alexandria.

Ontario's Liberal justice critic, Bob Chiarelli, MPP for Ottawa West, has asked Attorney General Marion Boyd to review the Cornwall force's handling of the case.

"Is there a privileged class in our society who can avoid the law by simply buying their way out of criminal prosecution? Chiarelli asked.

Peter Griffith, chief Crown attorney for Eastern Ontario, said that if a complainant makes a civil settlement, it does not preclude police from pursuing criminal charges.

"It isn't against the law (to reach an out-of-court settlement), Griffith said.

But a local Crown attorney instructed the force last September to end their work on the case, Leo Courville, head of the Cornwall Police Services Board, said Tuesday.

"The investigators were advised that in the absence of the complainant's active involvement in the case, the investigation should terminate, Courville said.

Guy Levac, a spokesman for the Ottawa diocese, said the Catholic church would "never, ever prevent someone from talking publicly about a complaint or stop them from going to police.

The Cornwall-Alexandria diocese has reassigned the priest accused of sexually abusing the man to a location it will not disclose.

The Ottawa police probe -- announced Tuesday in Cornwall -- is the latest twist in a case that includes the suicide last November of a probation officer, whom the man has accused of sexually abusing him when he was a teen.

The Ottawa force will also scrutinize what appears to be a 10-month delay by the Cornwall force in informing the Children's Aid Society in September 1993 of the man's sex-abuse allegations.

"Ten months is a long time, said Ottawa Deputy police Chief Don Lyon. "It is something that investigators will look at.

A Cornwall police officer -- who was not assigned to the case -- gave the child-welfare agency the police documents. For forwarding the documents without authorization, the unnamed officer faced an internal disciplinary investigation whose outcome was unclear Tuesday.