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Ex-Priest, Teacher Pleads Guilty to Child Sex Abuse in New York

By Rani Gupta
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A former teacher of the year at Martin County High School who was formerly a Catholic priest has pleaded guilty to sexually abusing a 6-year-old New York boy.

Palm City resident Barry E. Ryan, 56, pleaded guilty Wednesday to second-degree charge of sexual conduct against a child. He was arrested in March and charged with first-degree sodomy after prosecutors say he admitted abusing the boy between May and October 2003 during visits to New York's Long Island.

Ryan was hospitalized in March after allegedly being attacked in the Riverhead, N.Y., jail by another inmate. Chief Alan Otto, a jail spokesman, said the investigation into that incident hasn't been completed.

Ryan worked as a substitute teacher and media specialist at Martin County High School and was named teacher of the year in 2002. He went on sick leave in April 2003 and retired later that year, citing a struggle with terminal cancer.

District officials have said they never received any complaints about Ryan during that time.

Ryan is scheduled to be sentenced Dec. 1 in the Suffolk County, N.Y., Court. A county judge is expected to sentence him to two years in prison, according to the Long Island-based Newsday newspaper.

Ryan previously worked as a priest in New York and as an Air Force chaplain in Alabama before taking a leave of absence for personal reasons in 1995, according to Frank DeRosa, a spokesman for the Diocese of Brooklyn.

Ryan's attorney, Joseph Ostrowsky, did not return a call for comment Tuesday.

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