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## Diocese Hires Private Eye

By Stephanie Saul  
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The Diocese of Brooklyn has enlisted a former NYPD sex crimes expert to resolve lingering abuse allegations against some of its priests.

By contracting with Det. Brenda Vincent, the diocese apparently has become one of only a handful of the nation's 195 Roman Catholic dioceses with a private investigator probing claims of abuse.

Vincent, 46, began investigating priests in the diocese last year, according to diocesan spokesman Frank DeRosa. That was shortly after she retired from the NYPD, where she was known for several high-profile arrests while working in Brooklyn special victims units.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops recommended last month that dioceses hire experienced investigators when law enforcement authorities are not investigating claims of sexual abuse, often because the statute of limitations has run out.

"I think that when you're doing these kinds of investigations, the more you know how to do them, the more you know how to interview victims ... the better off you're going to be," said Kathleen McChesney, a former FBI agent who heads the Bishops' Office of Child and Youth Protection, based in Washington. McChesney said she knows of only half a dozen dioceses that have retained such investigators.

Vincent reports to an eight-member board of volunteers reviewing allegations against diocesan priests. The panel is headed by Bernard G. Helldorfer, chairman of the St. John's University Division of Criminal Justice and Legal Studies.

The diocese, which includes 1.8 million Catholics in Brooklyn and Queens, gave prosecutors a list of more than 30 priests who had been the subject of sexual abuse allegations.

Vincent recently has investigated claims against two suspended priests — the Rev. Joseph Byrns and the Rev. Frank Capellupo, Newsday learned.

Byrns, the former pastor of St. Rose of Lima Church in Brooklyn's Parkville section, has denied allegations he abused two brothers during the 1970s at St. Anastasia Parish in Douglaston.

Capellupo, the former pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes in Bushwick, was placed on administrative leave following his arrest in 2000 on sexual abuse allegations involving a teenage boy. The charges were dropped.

Since then, another man has told the diocese that he was abused as a boy by Capellupo, sources said.