



## INNOCENCE PROJECT OF FLORIDA, INC.

*Unlock the Truth*

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### For Immediate Release

April 14, 2020

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### Leonard Cure to be Released After 16 Years Wrongfully Incarcerated

*Cure is First Release Initiated by the Conviction Review Unit of the  
Seventeenth Judicial Circuit State Attorney's Office.*

**Tallahassee, FL** (April 14, 2020) – Today after more than 16 years behind bars, Leonard Cure will walk free from Sumter Correctional Institution, as a result of an agreement between the Conviction Review Unit (CRU) in the office of Seventeenth Judicial Circuit State Attorney Michael Satz, and Cure's attorneys at the Innocence Project of Florida (IPF). CRU founder and lead attorney Arielle Demby Berger determined "it is in the best interest of justice to release Mr. Cure as soon as possible. This will allow him to be released while we can thoroughly review his case." An agreed order modifying Cure's sentence to time served was signed by Circuit Judge John Murphy III today based on the CRU's recommendation.

Mr. Cure, upon finding he would walk free, said, "I am beyond excited. I have so many thanks for the State Attorney's Office and the Innocence Project of Florida for paving the way for my freedom. I'm looking forward to spending time with my family for the first time in 16 years."

The CRU opened its investigation on December 3, 2019 after receiving a letter from Mr. Cure. Ms. Demby Berger initiated a reexamination of the case and began a comprehensive review of Mr. Cure's claim of wrongful conviction. The CRU's report noted the troubling nature of how Mr. Cure became a suspect in the first place and suggested that he was a victim of eyewitness misidentification. Ms. Demby Berger sought the assistance of IPF Staff Attorney Krista Dolan and IPF Executive Director Seth Miller to collaboratively work on the case. IPF Legal Intern and Florida State University College of Law student Marc Simmons provided critical research and drafting in this joint effort.

Mr. Cure was convicted and sentenced to life in prison for the 2003 robbery and aggravated assault of two employees at a Walgreens. Although he had a solid alibi—he was at an ATM more than 3 miles away from the Walgreens minutes before the crime and was seen at his job while the crime was occurring—he was still identified initially by a law enforcement officer as a man she saw walking in the direction of the Walgreens shortly before the crime. The victims then identified Mr. Cure out of an incredibly suggestive photo presentation, part of which showed the victims four photos, all of which were of Cure. There was no additional physical or scientific evidence, nor corroborating witnesses, linking Cure to the crime.

The State's agreement to a sentence reduction to time served at this time will allow Mr. Cure to safely return to his family amidst the current public health crisis, while the CRU completes its investigation that will hopefully lead to exoneration.

IPF Staff Attorney Krista Dolan and lead attorney for Mr. Cure said, "We are so thrilled Ms. Demby Berger of the Broward CRU chose to investigate Mr. Cure's case and saw significant issues with the evidence to allow for his immediate release from his wrongful incarceration. Our hope is that by the end of their investigation, they will agree to further relief that vindicates Mr. Cure and recognizes his innocence. We look forward to more collaborative opportunities in this case and future cases to achieve justice for the innocent."

IPF Executive Director Seth Miller and co-counsel for Mr. Cure said, "This is a strange time with a lot of uncertainty about the future. At the Innocence Project of Florida, our primary concern is the health and safety of our clients and how, during this global health crisis, we can still achieve justice for them. Achieving freedom for Mr. Cure during this global pandemic, despite the limitations on our movement and activity in the courts, is a testament to the Broward State Attorney's Office's collaborative approach and IPF's unwavering commitment to achieving justice our clients."

*The Innocence Project of Florida (IPF) represents Mr. Cure in these proceedings. Since 2003, IPF has assisted in the release from wrongful incarceration of 21 innocent individuals who have collectively served more than 470 years for the crimes of others. Located in Tallahassee, IPF's mission is to find and free the innocent in Florida prisons, help these individuals transition back into a changed society, and work to reform the criminal justice system. For more information, visit [www.FloridaInnocence.org](http://www.FloridaInnocence.org).*

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