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MINUS CLEARED OF RAPE, KIDNAP CHARGES

Leonard Minus was exonerated this morning of charges that he kidnaped and sexually assaulted his former girlfriend at Indian River Community College, according to his Attorney, Fort Pierce criminal Lawyer Michael Kessler. In a negotiated settlement reached this morning, the charge of sexual battery was amended to a lesser charge that did not involve a sex crime. Additionally, the kidnaping charge was reduced to false imprisonment.

Mr. Minus maintained his innocence of all charges, but told the judge that the plea was in his best interest, because it meant that he got to go home to his family today. Circuit Judge James McCann accepted the negotiated settlement, and sentenced Mr. Minus to the time he had already served, and a period of probation.

A local woman had accused Mr. Minus of kidnaping her from IRCC, and forcing her to drive out into a wooded area, where he sexually assaulted her. His first trial resulted in a conviction and a sentence of life in prison. That conviction was overturned by the Court of Appeals, which determined that the trial judge had wrongfully prevented the jury from hearing important evidence which contradicted the accuser's claims.

That evidence included letters written by the accuser to Mr. Minus, in which she apologized for what she had done to him, according to Kessler. The wrongly excluded evidence also included the fact that the couple had a lengthy romantic relationship, had been sexually active together, and that she was at the time of the accusation already pregnant with Mr. Minus' child.