

Police say buckle nearly prompted shooting

by UPI

KEY WEST, Fla. -- A Florida police detective said she nearly shot a teenager who was wearing a belt buckle that resembled a gun.

Detective Donnie Catala of the Monroe County Sheriff's Office said after confronting 17-year-old William Morales in response to a possible kidnapping report, the teen reached for what looked like a handgun at his waist, The Miami Herald said Thursday.

"The hair stood up on my neck and I was squeezing the trigger when he went for the 'gun,'" Catala said of Tuesday's incident. "I ordered him to put his hands up -- with a few cuss words -- or I would shoot. His hand was about 6 inches from the 'gun' and I was within milliseconds of shooting."

Catala said the teen told officers the apparent firearm was a belt buckle and put his hands in the air.

"We didn't know it wasn't a gun until we actually took the belt off," Catala told the Herald.

The newspaper said Morales was released after a teenage girl found in Morales' vehicle informed the officers she voluntarily entered the vehicle, contrary to the kidnapping report.

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