



Written by [Mary McHugh](#) on June 17, 2010

## Teenage Boy in Florida — Attempted Kidnapping or Not?

There is controversy over whether a 14-year-old Orlando-area boy who says he was just trying to help a small girl find her mother last Thursday, June 10, actually committed a crime.

According to his mother, Mildred Roman, Edwin McFarlane was with her in the Burlington Coat Factory on West Colonial Drive for the first time. While she looked at a display in the doorway of the store, Edwin went toward a shopping cart. According to the police report:



Mr. McFarlane advised that he discovered the victim inside of the store. He believed that she was lost, because she was not near an adult. At that time, he approached and told her that he was going to help her find her mother. Mr. McFarlane walked with the victim outside and he believed that three unknown women who walked out of the store prior to him entering could have been the child's mother.

Mr. McFarlane reported that he approached a car that he saw the three women driving. However, he noticed that they looked at him without saying a word. Mr. McFarlane then turned and started walking back toward the store, when he was approached by the victim's mother. At that time, he returned the child. When asked about his actions, Mr. McFarlane advised that he was just trying to help the child. He did not think to request a store employee to help locate the child.

One account said that the child, a three-year-old toddler, was found by McFarlane playing in the toy department. Her mother, Gizelle Pierre, said she was in line at the cash register with her three children. Looking at an item there and deciding against a purchase, she returned it to the shelf. Turning afterward, she saw that her daughter, Adryne Jean Phillippe, was missing. A woman customer behind her, Terri Johnson, advised that she witnessed McFarlane, who is six feet tall and whom she assumed to be the father or a relative, approach the child and speak to her. The little girl then went off with him. Pierre began calling for her daughter.

Surveillance video shows him leaving the store with her and taking her hand once outside. Shortly afterwards, her mother can be seen running out with Johnson. When questioned by the girl's mother who caught up with them, McFarlane explained he thought Adryne was lost and was trying to reunite her with her mother. Pierre took her daughter back inside the store. An employee notified the police.

The police report account of McFarlane's mother, Ms. Roman, ran as follows:



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Ms. Roman reported that she noticed that her son was walking with a small child. When she questioned her son's action, he told her that he was going to find the mother. Ms. Roman advised that she walked outside and an unknown man inquired about the child being lost. Ms. Roman advised that she told the man that Edwin McFarlane was her son and he was helping the child find her mother. Shortly after speaking with the unknown male, Ms. Roman made contact with the victim's mother and the child was returned.

Once all pertinent interviews were completed and McFarlane interrogated, he ultimately was charged with false imprisonment. Those defending him point out that he would not have returned to the store with his mother to shop if something was amiss; also, he has no previous criminal record.

Edwin, his mother, and his lawyer, Natilie Jackson, appeared on ABC's [Good Morning America](#) show June 17. The ABC website account states:

If convicted, Edwin would go to juvenile detention and could serve up to five years. Until now, the boy had a pristine record with no criminal history, Jackson said.

But she said it's unlikely the Orange County state attorney would choose to file charges. "The problem is, now he has an arrest record," Jackson said. "We are challenging them [the state attorney's office] today to do the right thing and dismiss this case against Edwin."

Jackson also called the sheriff's department to expunge Edwin's arrest record. Orange County Sheriff Jerry Demings has kept silent about his department's actions so far. "The sheriff is holding back," department spokesman Capt. Angelo Nieves told the Sentinel. "It's not a refusal to talk. He's letting the information run its course."

If he had it to do all over again, Edwin said he would still help the little girl, but maybe alert an adult and "ask for help" next time.



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