



Highlands County Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Susan Benton

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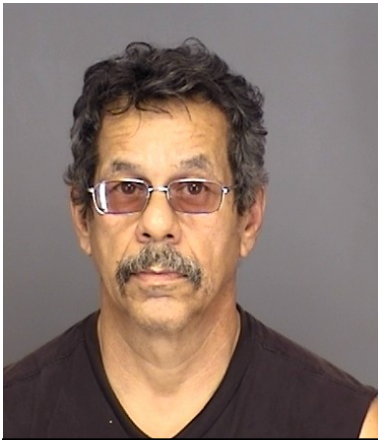
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 14, 2016

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Incident at Memorial Elementary School

SEBRING -



Rafael Gilbert Colon

On December 6, 2016 School Resource Deputy David Lightsey was contacted regarding an incident that occurred that afternoon at Memorial Elementary. At that time, Rafael Colon, 61, of Sebring, FL, and another parent were waiting for their children/grandchildren in the front office of the school. While they were waiting, a 4 year old student ran into the office. The school employee who would normally be at the front desk had just stepped into the adjacent nurse's office for a brief moment. Colon, not related or even knowing the child, asked the child if she was ready to go; Colon then stood up and took the child by the hand and walked out the front door of the school. A paraprofessional saw Colon walking out the front door with the child and immediately followed them out the front door where she took the child away from Colon. The child was not harmed in any way.

Witnesses to this event said that Mr. Colon made the statement: "I'm going to teach all of them a lesson" as he took the child by the hand and left the office. The School's administration and the Sheriff's Office took this incident extremely seriously. The School's administration trespassed Colon from the School and after a full investigation by Deputy Sheriff Lightsey an arrest warrant was obtained from the Court for Rafael Gilberto Colon, for the charge of: Interfering with the Custody of a Minor. Colon is currently being held in the Highlands County Jail, under \$10,000 bond.