



\*\*\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\*\*\*

April 30, 2026

On April 20, 2026, at approximately 1400 hours, Lyon County Sheriff's Office Deputies responded to Fernley Intermediate School for a report of child abuse. Deputies conducted an investigation into reports of a substitute teacher making inappropriate, threatening comments to students and placing his hands around two students' necks while shaking them. The teacher had been relieved of his duties for the day prior to deputies arriving, but multiple witnesses confirmed the reports they received. Deputies located the substitute teacher, 40-year-old James Palu of Fernley, Nevada and conducted an interview with him. Palu told the deputies he was conducting his introduction to the class and described himself as a big teddy bear. He then warned the students, if they misbehaved, he would "Ring their chicken necks". Palu stated he did not touch the students but may have demonstrated on himself. This was directly contrary to the statements made by the witnesses on scene. When pressed on the matter, Palu became evasive and the interview ended.

While the students did not show visible signs of injury, one of them was later evaluated by medical professionals and unseen injuries were confirmed. Deputies were later able to obtain medical records confirming the details of the injuries.

A warrant for Palu's arrest was expedited and obtained on April 30, 2026. A short time later, Palu was arrested in Fernley on the warrant. He was booked into the Lyon County Jail for Felony Child Abuse or Neglect (1<sup>st</sup>) and is being held on a \$20,000.00 bondable bail.

This remains an active investigation and any information the public may have regarding this case should be reported to Deputy J. Vazquez at 775-463-6600.

Mitch Brantingham  
Chief Deputy  
Lyon County Sheriff's Office