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**JUSTICE NEWS**

**Department of Justice**

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, January 5, 2012

**Minnesota Man Pleads Guilty to Sexual Abuse of Minors**

WASHINGTON – A Minnesota man pleaded guilty today in federal court in Minneapolis to abusive sexual contact of two minor boys, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Justice Department's Criminal Division; Brig. Gen. Kevin Jacobsen of the U.S. Air Force, Office of Special Investigations; and John Morton, Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI).

In pleading guilty before U.S. District Judge Ann D. Montgomery, Joshua Gardner, 29, admitted that sometime between September 1997 and May 2002, he sexually abused two boys under the age of 12 on Kadena Air Force Base, Okinawa, Japan, which as a U.S. Air Force base was in the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States. At the time of the offenses, Gardner resided in Okinawa. According to his plea agreement, Gardner admitted to engaging in sexual acts with both boys.

At sentencing, Gardner faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. A sentencing date has not yet been scheduled by the court.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit [www.projectsafechildhood.gov](http://www.projectsafechildhood.gov).

This case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorney Mi Yung Park of CEOS. This case is a result of investigative efforts the U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations in Moody Air Force Base, Ga., and ICE-HSI in Minneapolis.

12-014

Criminal Division