



---

**PRESS RELEASE**

**CONTACT:** Elizabeth M. Martinez  
Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney  
Public Affairs Officer  
[elizabeth.martinez@usdoj.gov](mailto:elizabeth.martinez@usdoj.gov)  
505.224.1469

**For Immediate Release**

**November 8, 2012**

**FORMER ARMY RECRUITER FROM MIDLAND, TEX., TO SERVE 87 MONTHS  
IN PRISON FOR FEDERAL CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION CONVICTION**

ALBUQUERQUE – Earlier today, Arnold Gonzales, 27, was sentenced to an 87-month term of imprisonment to be followed by ten years of supervised release for his child sexual exploitation conviction. Gonzales also was ordered to comply with sex offender registration and notification requirements.

Gonzales was a military recruiter employed by the U.S. Army and was stationed at the U.S. Army Recruiting Station in Midland, Tex., when he was arrested in this case. According to the court filings, between April 24, 2012 and May 2, 2012, Gonzales used a computer and cellular phone to entice a person whom he believed to be less than 18 years of age to engage in sexual activity. Gonzales was arrested on May 2, 2012, after he traveled from Oklahoma City, Okla., to Clovis, N.M., for the purpose of engaging in sexual activity with a person whom he believed to be a 12-year-old girl.

U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that, on July 17, 2012, Gonzales entered a guilty plea to an information charging him with interstate travel with intent to engage in illicit sexual conduct with a minor. He has been in federal custody since that time.

During his plea hearing, Gonzales acknowledged that he was arrested as the result of an undercover investigation by the Curry County Sheriff's Office (CCSO). Gonzales admitted that, on April 24, 2012, he replied to an online advertisement placed by a CCSO undercover agent entitled, "CUTE/YOUNG IF AGE DOESN'T MATTER HIT ME UP." Gonzales's reply initiated a stream of E-mail and texting communication between the CCSO agent, who represented himself as a 12-year-old girl, and Gonzales, who asked the "girl" for nude photos of herself and discussed the sexual acts that he wanted to engage in with the "girl." On May 1, 2012, Gonzales sent a text to the CCSO agent stating that he would be traveling to Clovis the following day for the purpose of having sex with the "girl." On May 2, 2012, when Gonzales arrived at a location in Clovis provided to him by the CCSO agent, he was arrested.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Charlyn E. Rees and was investigated by the CCSO and the FBI. It was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing

epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, 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 <http://www.justice.gov/psc/>.

The case also was brought as part of the New Mexico Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force whose mission it is to locate, track, and capture Internet child sexual predators and Internet child pornographers in New Mexico. There are 64 federal, state and local law enforcement agencies associated with the Task Force, which is funded by a grant administered by the New Mexico Attorney General's Office. Anyone with information relating to suspected child predators and suspected child abuse is encouraged to contact federal or local law enforcement.

###

12-309