



Department of Justice

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MINNESOTA MAN CHARGED WITH SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF MINORS

WASHINGTON - A Minnesota man was charged in an indictment unsealed today in Minneapolis with two counts of aggravated sexual abuse and two counts of abusive sexual contact of a child, 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 (ICE).

According to the indictment, which was returned by a federal grand jury on Sept 20, 2011, Joshua Gardner, 29, sexually abused two boys under the age of 12 on the Kadena U.S. Air Force Base in Okinawa, Japan, between September 1997 and May 2002. During that time period, Gardner resided in Okinawa.

Gardner, who currently lives in Minnesota, was arrested on Sept. 30, 2011, and made his initial appearance today in federal court in Minneapolis. A detention hearing has been scheduled for Oct. 4, 2011.

Gardner faces a maximum penalty of life in prison and a \$250,000.

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.

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

The details contained in the indictment are allegations. The defendant is presumed to be innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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