

Should 'Sesame Street' Distance Itself From Elmo?

As a father of a child obsessed with **Elmo** this is a story which has made for discussion in my home. My kids now see Elmo in Daddy's newspaper and I am sure in many homes throughout America there has been discussion about why Elmo is appearing in the media.

As a parent who makes a living as a marketer, I have used this incident to teach my kids to be even more aware of their circumstances; the world is a scary place when you have to beware of **Elmo**. Just because Elmo plays a good guy, the real life Elmo is someone to be wary of. We have seen many fallen heroes—from Pee Wee Herman to Tiger Woods, Michael Vick to Lance Armstrong—and it's a time to realize that just because someone is marketed a certain way, that doesn't mean it's the real person.

At the end of the day, the iconic character of Elmo will live on and there will not be any lasting damage to Sesame Street. The Elmo brand is much larger than **Kevin Clash** and this issue will pass.

Sesame Street should quickly distance themselves from Clash—and ensure that the legacy of Elmo continues and lives on. **Sesame Street** should not address the Clash controversy on the program.

As superstar basketball player Charles Barkley said many years ago, "I am not a role model," and surely in the case of Kevin Clash that statement is more true than ever before. Just because someone plays a character who is friendly to kids doesn't mean that person is truly friendly to kids.

In many homes like mine, kids watch and love Elmo—and that won't change.

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