

When Sex Scandals Hit Sesame Street

It's a sad day for Sesame Street—and the company knows it.

According to The Associated Press, Elmo puppeteer **Kevin Clash** has resigned from the popular children's broadcast in the wake of an allegation that he had sex with an underage youth. The AP reports:

"As the announcement was made, a lawsuit was being filed in federal court in New York charging Clash with sexual abuse of a second youth. The lawsuit alleges that Cecil Singleton, then 15 and now an adult, was persuaded by Clash to meet for sexual encounters. The lawsuit seeks damages in excess of \$5 million.

"Clash, who had been on 'Sesame Street' for 28 years, created the high-pitched voice and child-like persona for Elmo, a furry, red Muppet that became one of the most popular characters on the show and one of the company's most lucrative properties. Sesame Workshop produces 'Sesame Street' in New York.

"Clash's exit followed a tumultuous week that began on Nov. 12 with a statement from the company that Clash had requested a leave of absence following the charge by a man in his early 20s that he had had a relationship with Clash when he was 16. Clash denied the charge from that man, who has not been publicly identified, calling it 'false and defamatory'."

It's a sad day for Sesame Street, indeed, when a sex scandal hits its cast. But it wouldn't be the first sad day for kids, considering widespread abuse in the Catholic church and the Boy Scouts.

Statistics say incidents of child sex abuse are declining, but it's difficult to be sure because so many cases go unreported.

Would you know how to recognize signs of child sexual abuse in the children in your life?