

Beat: Miscellaneous

## Third man accuses former Elmo voice actor of underage sex abuse

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**USPA News** - A Florida man on Tuesday accused Kevin Clash, the puppeteer who created the high-pitched voice of Muppet character Elmo on "Sesame Street," of having sexual contact with him in New York City when he was below the state's age of consent. The now 29-year-old man, who has only been identified by his initials D. O. and is referred to as John Doe, claims he met Clash through a gay telephone chat line in 2000. The Emmy-award winning puppeteer was about 40 years old at the time while John was 16, below the age of consent in the state of New York.

According to a lawsuit filed Tuesday in the U.S. District Court of the Southern District of New York, John was contacted by Clash who identified himself as a 30-year-old businessman named Craig. They allegedly continued to talk on the phone for several days before Clash invited John to come to his apartment in Manhattan. While traveling to the New York area for modeling opportunities, John said he went to see Clash at his apartment. "Kevin Clash gave John alcohol and groomed him. Kevin Clash and John engaged in sexual contact, including oral sex and digital penetration of John's anus," the lawsuit claims. "This was John's first sexual experience of this type." John soon after returned to his home in Florida, but the two kept in contact and regularly spoke on the phone, during which Clash allegedly asked to meet for sexual encounters. After John turned 18 and graduated high school he moved to New York City, where the couple engaged in a sexual relationship. The accuser said he was unaware of Clash's real identity, although he admitted seeing numerous Elmo dolls, photographs of Elmo with celebrities, and an Emmy award he believed to be fake. After he turned 18, John said he searched the Internet for "Kevin Clash" and discovered that Clash was in fact the voice of Elmo. The lawsuit alleged that Clash committed sexual crimes, but the state's statute of limitations prevent the possibility of criminal charges. As such, John is demanding an unspecified amount in damages for mental, psychological and emotional trauma as a result of his sexual activity with Clash. "Although Kevin Clash's acts of inducement and enticement to sexual activity began in or about 2000, when John was a minor, he was not immediately aware of his injuries," the lawsuit said. "As a 16 year old child, John was not emotionally or psychologically prepared for a sexual relationship with a grown man. As a compliant victim, John did not become aware that he had suffered adverse psychological and emotional effects from Kevin Clash's sexual acts and conduct until 2012." In a statement read by attorney Jeff Herman, John said he was coming forward to support two other men who made similar accusations against Clash. "Just say sorry so we can all move on with our lives," John said in the statement. "I pray that Kevin seeks help because, under these sexual demons, is an incredible man." Herman said John worked on a book in 2009 and included a chapter which discussed the alleged abuse, although the book was never published. "When we first met I was 16 and there was no intercourse," John wrote, according to an excerpt read by Herman. "However, lots of heavy kissing and he showed me what it felt like to get on your knees and obey your man." John said he and Clash, who he referred to as "Mr. Tickler", role-played being father and son. "When I arrived inside, he greeted me with a pleasant smile and a bear hug," John wrote. "Mr. Tickler definitely lied about his age, however he was still attractive. We sat down and talked for hours. He really seemed to be into me and I was definitely into him." John added: "On the first night, I did not lose my virginity. However, I learned what it felt like to kiss a man and take your breath away. He took his finger and placed it inside my ass and told me how tight I was. ... I could tell by the slight smile on his face that he wanted to be my first. We will take this thing slow, just let me taste you, he requested. I didn't want to disappoint so I allowed Mr. Tickler to taste my growing manhood and I decided to return the favor." Clash denied the latest accusations but gave no other comment. He resigned from the long-running American children's television series on November 20, saying the controversy surrounding his personal life had become a distraction. "Personal matters have diverted attention away from the important work Sesame Street is doing and I cannot allow it to go any longer," Clash said at the time, adding that he loved every day of his 28 years at Sesame Street. Last week's resignation came as an adult man, identified as Cecil Singleton, also filed a lawsuit in a New York City court and claimed that Clash coerced him to meet for sexual encounters when he was 15 years old. The civil lawsuit seeks \$5 million in damages from the puppeteer. Earlier, another man claimed he was 16 years old when he had a sexual relationship with Clash. The voice actor immediately requested a leave of absence from his work to deal with the issue, describing the allegations as "false and defamatory." The accuser recanted his claims several days later.

**Article online:**

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-282/third-man-accuses-former-elmo-voice-actor-of-underage-sex-abuse.html>

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