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**AWARD-WINNING *BEING ELMO: A PUPPETEER'S JOURNEY*
TO PREMIERE ON *INDEPENDENT LENS* ON THURSDAY, APRIL 5, 2012 WITH
SPECIAL ENCORE PRESENTATION ON MONDAY, APRIL 9, 2012**

“Grade A! A marvelous movie! It’s a documentary about Kevin Clash, who became the voice and operator of Elmo, the tomato-red fur ball and emissary of hugs who is without a doubt the most beloved Muppet of his time.”

- Owen Gleiberman, *Entertainment Weekly*

“Remarkable...a heartwarming story of how one person realized his dream, and made significant sacrifices along the way.” - Leonard Maltin, [The Huffington Post](#)

“A winning tale of the persistence and creativity behind one of the most famous and fuzziest faces in the world.”- Neil Genzlinger, [The New York Times](#)

(San Francisco, CA) —The award-winning documentary by Constance Marks called ***Being Elmo: A Puppeteer's Journey***, about legendary *Sesame Street* puppeteer Kevin Clash, will premiere on the Emmy® Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*, hosted by Mary Louise Parker, on Thursday, April 5, 2012 at 10 PM, followed by a special encore presentation on Monday, April 9, 2012 at 10 PM.

Adored by children of all ages around the world, Elmo is an international icon. But few people know the inspiring story of his creator, Kevin Clash. As a kid growing up in Baltimore in the 1970s, Clash had a dream — to be a puppeteer and work with his idol, Jim Henson. With a supportive family behind him every step of the way, Kevin made those dreams come true, with



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his Elmo considered one of the most beloved characters of all time. Narrated by Whoopi Goldberg, *Being Elmo: A Puppeteer's Journey* includes rare archival footage, interviews with Frank Oz, Rosie O'Donnell, Cheryl Henson, Joan Ganz Cooney, and others and offers a behind-the-scenes look at *Sesame Street* and the Jim Henson Workshop.

To learn more about the film, visit the companion website for *Being Elmo* at www.pbs.org/independentlens/being_elmo. Get detailed information on the film, watch preview clips, read an interview with the filmmaker, and explore the subject in depth with links and resources. The site also features a Talkback section where viewers can share their ideas and opinions.

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About Kevin Clash

Kevin Clash, whose characters include Elmo, Hoots the Owl, and Baby Natasha, is *Sesame Street's* Senior Puppet Coordinator and Muppet Captain as well as Sesame Workshop's Senior Creative Consultant. Clash began building puppets at the age of ten and performed on Baltimore's Harbor Front and local television as a teenager. Clash's first professional television work was for the CBS affiliate in Baltimore. He came to *Sesame Street* after attracting the attention of Muppet™ designer Kermit Love. Clash's film credits include Jim Henson's 1986 fantasy film *Labyrinth*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles I and II*, *Muppet Treasure Island*, *Muppets from Space* and *Elmo in Grouchland*. His television work includes *The Great Space Coaster*, *Captain Kangaroo*, *Dinosaurs*, and *Muppets Tonight*. He also was co-executive producer for *Elmopalooza*, *CinderElmo*, and *Elmo's World*; co-producer for *The Adventures of Elmo in Grouchland*; and also directs *Sesame Street* episodes and other projects. Clash directed and co-produced the DVD series *Sesame Beginnings* for Sesame Workshop and directed and co-produced Sesame Workshop's outreach DVD *Talk, Listen, Connect: Deployments, Homecomings and Changes*.

His most recent work includes directing and appearing in *Talk, Listen, Connect: When Families Grieve*. He also directed the Muppet™ segments of the PBS primetime special, *Families Stand Together: Feeling Secure in Tough Times*. Clash won Emmy Awards for Outstanding Performer in a Children's Series for his work as Elmo in *Sesame Street Seasons 21, 35-37, 39 and 40* and in 2001-2008 and 2010 for his work as co-executive producer for Outstanding Preschool Children's Series. In September 2006, Clash released his autobiography, *My Life as a Furry Red Monster, What Elmo Has Taught Me About Life, Love, and Laughing Out Loud*.

About the Filmmakers

Constance Marks (Director/Producer) is an award-winning independent documentary filmmaker. She is the founder and president of Constance Marks Productions, Inc., a documentary production company based in New York City. Marks began her filmmaking career over 30 years ago as an assistant editor for the renowned Cinema Verite pioneers, David and Albert Maysles.

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Marks' critically acclaimed films have been shown theatrically, broadcast widely, and garnered numerous awards. Her productions include *Return to Appalachia*, which aired on PBS; *Let's Fall in Love: A Singles Weekend at the Concord Hotel*, which was selected by the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences as one of the outstanding documentaries of the year; and *Green Chimneys*, a full-length documentary feature film that premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and aired on HBO. Marks has produced numerous films focusing on important social issues including homelessness, the elderly, experimental charter schools, and substance abuse recovery residences.

James J. Miller (Director of Photography/Producer) began his career as a cameraman/lighting director in the late 1970s at a PBS affiliate and later started his freelance career in New York, where he joined the crew of *Sesame Street*. As a freelancer, Miller has traveled extensively around the globe as a director of photography and cameraman. His passion for "having every frame tell the story" has earned him multiple Emmy® Awards. Miller's cinematography on the 1997 documentary *Green Chimneys* won accolades and the film went on to win First Prize at Taos Talking Pictures, Best Film at the Bermuda International Film Festival, and Best Documentary at the Denver and San Jose Film Festivals. Miller's diverse shooting style enables him to work in a wide variety of genres including single camera documentaries, multi-camera concerts, and entertainment shows, sports, and theatre. His clients include the major networks, Discovery Channel, TLC, National Geographic, MTV, and VH1, as well as international networks such as the BBC, Channel 9 Australia, and Granada. More notably, Miller has covered the Eco-Challenge and seven Olympics. His current projects include documentaries, multi-camera entertainment, and Broadway shows. Miller is an avid marathoner and triathlete.

Corinne LaPook (Producer) started her career in the entertainment industry working for legendary graphic designer Lou Dorfsman at CBS. She joined the original team of MTV: Music Television during the revolutionary birth of the network. After working in the music industry for several years, including positions in artist management and marketing, she became the Director of The American Film Institute's New York office. Corinne has reunited with her 8th grade film classmate Connie Marks to produce *Being Elmo: A Puppeteer's Journey*.

Philip Shane (Co-Director/Editor/Writer) has been making documentaries for more than 20 years. He was Bob Eisenhardt's co-editor on Constance Marks' *Green Chimneys*. In addition to *Being Elmo*, Shane has edited many documentaries about famous performers, including *Making Trouble: Three Generations of Funny Jewish Women* (Sundance Channel, 2007); Paul McCartney's *Wingspan* (2001, dir. Alistair Donald); and *The Last Of The First* (2007, dir. Anja Baron) about the legendary Harlem Blues and Jazz Band. He has also worked with Bruce Springsteen, Carly Simon, and the Boston Symphony. For more than ten years, Shane edited many long-form documentaries at ABC News, along with senior producer Richard Gerda, including Ted Koppel's *Tip Of The Spear* (DuPont Columbia Award for Broadcast Journalism, 2004) and *Martin Luther King, Jr.: Searching For The Promised Land* (Emmy® Award, 1999). Prior to *Being Elmo*, he produced and edited the two-hour special, *Einstein: The Real Story Of The Man Behind The Theory* (History Channel, 2008).

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Justin Weinstein (Editor/Writer) is a Brooklyn-based documentary filmmaker whose work over the past ten years has been a combination of long and short-form documentary films on many subjects, most often those focused on scientific and environmental issues. Most recently, Weinstein produced several documentaries on energy issues. He produced, shot, and edited a 20-minute documentary about mountaintop coal mining for Al Jazeera English called *Face-Off at Coal River Mountain*. For the Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR), he co-produced the feature documentary *Dirty Business: Clean Coal and the Battle for Our Energy Future*. During four years at ABC News and Peter Jennings Productions, Weinstein worked as a producer on numerous projects, including the prime-time ABC News two-hour documentary special *Last Days on Earth*.

Joel Goodman (Composer) has scored over 100 films and television shows for an impressive array of distinguished directors and producers including Wong Kar-wei, Barbara Kopple, Albert Maysles, Barak Goodman, Kevin Spacey, Irene Taylor Brodsky, Andrew Jarecki, Mark Zwonitzer, Marshall Curry, Oren Jacoby, and Michael Epstein. Joel's new main theme for the top-rated PBS series *American Experience* premiered in January 2011. His work includes many Oscar® nominated films and Emmy award winning television productions. Joel is also an active record producer.

About *Independent Lens*

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* features unforgettable stories about unique individuals, communities, and moments in history. Presented by the Independent Television Service (ITVS), the series is supported by interactive companion websites and national publicity and community engagement campaigns. *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts. The series producer is Lois Vossen.

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