



They'll annoy the hell out of you and want money to pose for photos. When they hug and grope tourists, you can't know how clean they are under those homemade costumes. They're often dangerous to passers-by when they fight each other for best sidewalk turf. The costumes are not authorized by Disney nor other originators.

How do you deal with the bothersome characters? Especially when you're with vulnerable young kids, the quick answer is to move away swiftly. If approached, give a quick, loud NO! If the kids want to pose with genuine cartoon characters, take them to a Disney or Universal theme park. Of course, for some sentimental seniors, there's another aspect of the street character dilemma. Under those sweaty costumes are people trying to earn a living. For many reasons, such as poverty, unemployment, as well as legal and not-so-legal immigration, this is the only way they can do it.

You may decide to have sympathy for the fake Mickey or Superman, and consider it when the approach is polite. Take the photos and pass along a generous \$5 or \$10. Of course, you're being ripped off, but only mildly compared to when you contribute to a Las Vegas casino.