

I had a strange version of the cold, flu, and plague recently that laid me low for a couple of weeks and turned me into a barely sentient pile of goo. All I was capable of was collapsing on the couch in the BigAssTV room until it was time to stumble off to bed just in time for the fever dreams to kick in. I couldn't follow any plot more complicated than a 3 Stooges short so for my viewing pleasure I decided to watch some episodes from the fifties TV show, *Adventures of Superman*, starring George Reeves. Inertia through illness allowed me to sit back day after day while all 104 episodes washed over me.

When the last season wrapped up I watched the two Superman serials made in 1948 and 1950 starring Kirk Alyn as The Man of Steel. Most sane people would have given up after slogging through *Superman and the Mole Men* but I kept going and watched the first two Christopher Reeve Superman movies, the 2006 reboot, *Superman Returns*, and the latest entry of the franchise, *Man of Steel*. As my health improved I slowly regained a reasonable facsimile of sanity. I was once again capable of going outside and pretend I am a normal person. As Alex at the end of *A Clockwork Orange* said, *I was cured all right!*

Isaac Newton's third law states for every action there is *always* an equal reaction. That's How Things Work. But little did I know, following the *days* of steeping in All Things Superman, what *my* reaction was going to be after delving into all that weirdness.

In 1939 Superman's creators, writer Jerry Siegel and artist Joe Shuster, came up with Ultra-Humanite, the first super-villain encountered by Superman. As super-villains go, Ultra-Humanite, a criminal mastermind with a crippled body but a highly advanced intellect, just wasn't that super. But one year later Siegel and Shuster came up with a super-*duper* villain, Lex Luthor.

In the comic books Luthor was not only a mad scientist but had taken control of several

Lex Luthor INC.

Written by Bob Alexander

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European countries and was trying to provoke a world war. Superman steps in, just in the nick of time of course, exposes Luthors nefarious scheme, and the warring countries declare an armistice. In the 80s and 90s Luthor morphed from a mad scientist into an evil corporatist with immense wealth and power. But his goals remained the same kill Superman and enslave the Earth as a stepping stone to dominating the universe.

Up on the silver screen character actor Lyle Talbot, Ozzies neighbor Joe Randolph in *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*

, played Luthor in the second serial, while Gene Hackman, and Kevin Spacey donned the bald-cap for the mega-budgeted Superman films.

In the 1950 serial, *Atom Man vs. Superman*, Luthor blackmailed the city of Metropolis by threatening to destroy the entire community with a number of deadly devices including a disintegrating machine .

Gene Hackmans Luthor bought up all the barren desert in California and planned to divert a nuclear missile to explode that would trigger an earthquake along the San Andreas fault. When most of California sank into the Pacific Ocean, Luthors desert would become his *new* West Coast.

Kevin Spaceys Luthor had a another real-estate oriented scheme. From Wikipedia:

By combining one of the stolen Kryptonian crystals with Kryptonite, Luthor can grow a new continental landmass in the Northern Atlantic Ocean, one that will cause sea levels to rise drastically and have Lex the opportunity to get revenge on Superman, as well as kill billions of people and afford him full control of the only available land for the survivors.

In the comics and the movies Luthors all about one thing: destroy hundreds of thousands, millions or even *billions* of lives for money and power. Thats his raison d'tre in the Superman universe.

After I emerged from my Fortress of Sick-itude it occurred to me that there wasnt a whole hell of a lot of difference between what had been playing on my BigAssTV and Current Events. I dont know if Life Imitates Art, or if its the other way around, but have you noticed we are living in a comic book? Our lives are dominated by multiple versions of Supermans arch nemesis, Lex Luthor. Mad scientists and billionaires are doing everything they can think of to increase their immense wealth and power even if it means destroying the planet in the process.

Are not the board of directors of British Petroleum, or the heads of the four companies scalping the Earth to get at the Athabasca oil sands, clones of the comic book megalomaniac?

Freedom Industries had three major chemical accidents over the last five years and in 2010 released toxic gas into the atmosphere. The company was bound and determined to poison West Virginia because it made them *money*. Freedom Industries filed for bankruptcy protection eight days after their latest foray into effing-up the drinking water. Thats the way things go now. The Lex Luthors privatize the profits and socialize the clean-up costs.

Jamie Dimon and the rest of the Wall Street gangsters slavishly follow the Lex Luthor playbook while Dick Cheney's career highlights in the private and public sectors look like they were cut and pasted from Luthors resume.

In the comics and the movies Luthor surrounds himself with bungling minions and molls. Louis Gohmert, Michelle Bachmann, Rick Perry, and the rest of the tea-bagging politico-freaks pick up their checks, directly or indirectly, from the Luthor Brothers or the Koch Brothers.

We used to have a moderately responsive government, a watchdog press that actually worked every once in awhile, but that was before the corporate Lex Luthors literally bought the media, and the government, and paid off the hired help.

Things are looking mighty dire these days but wait

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Look up in the sky! Its a bird its a plane

Nope. Never mind.

Its a bird.

Ysee the problem is were *surrounded* by Lex Luthors but we aint got no Superman.