

Excerpt from the Editorial Pages of the Daily Planet, Monday, June 17, 2013

Heroes, Villains, Bunglers and Profiteers

By Perry White, Editor in Chief

As we look back on the attack by the forces of General Zod last weekend, the human cost of the invasion is becoming apparent. The toll is truly horrific: 129 thousand known killed, nearly a million injured, and over a quarter of a million still missing. While some hope remains that there are survivors under the debris, as the hours have turned in to days those hopes are fading. Fortunately the Daily Planet Building suffered only superficial damage, but like most Big Apricot families we too lost more than we could afford. We join with those in mourning, and pray for those who were lost. We especially mourn the heroes of our local police, fire, and emergency services, who rushed towards the scene of the disaster as others fled in fear.

Disasters can bring out the best in human nature, but also uncover the worst. The financial toll is equally enormous, and it is here the darker side is unfortunately revealed. The dust from collapsing buildings had not settled before LexCorp's infamous Kinetic Assessment Cartel (KAC) were spreading across the city, calculators in hand, tallying the damage and, no doubt, getting a jump on their potential competitors for lucrative post-apocalypse recovery contracts. KAC's initial estimate of over \$750 Billion in direct physical damage is truly astronomical, and probably correct, but not as astronomical as the profits these vultures hope to reap from the city's misfortune. Of course the city must be rebuilt, but we must say we are disappointed in Mayor Berkowitz for giving LexCorp a sole source contract for this vital task. We suspect the Mayor will regret this contract at some point. With billions more in cleanup, economic impact, and other costs the total will easily be in the trillions of dollars.

Finally, while we honor the bravery and dedication of our Armed Forces, especially the sacrifice of Col. Hardy in destroying the World Engine, we would be remiss if we did not point out that our military was initially not only ineffective, but the source of considerable unnecessary damage. An assessment of the Battle of Smallville by Dr. Edward Johnson of the University of Metropolis has shown that fully 87% of the damage to Smallville was caused by friendly fire, with billions of dollars of aircraft, satellites, and other hardware lost during the ensuing conflict. Again, we do not fault the courageous airman and soldiers who valiantly fought alien invaders possessed of superhuman strength and vastly superior technology, but our leaders showed failures of judgment and management that will require serious review. And what of the so-called "Superman"? First, our government cowardly turned him over to the enemy, then worked with him to repel the forces of General Zod from his adoptive yet ungrateful home. The question of how our "intelligence" community with their multi-billion dollar budgets and intrusive, probably unconstitutional monitoring could fail to note an alien living among us when a single reporter, our own award winning Lois Lane, was able to find him using little more than hard work and a notepad is an embarrassment to those agencies, one that cries out for a Congressional Inquiry. The amateurish attempt to follow our new found hero (dare we say, superhero) at the cost of a multi-million dollar drone was simply absurd. General Swanwick should be ashamed of himself for ordering it – did not the Man of Steel earn our trust?

This early assessment may sound harsh. There is always a tendency to "rally around the flag" after catastrophes, but our job as journalists is to report to you our readers the truth as we see it. This means an honest review of recent events. We owe it to those who were lost to honestly assess the damage, monitor the recovery process, acknowledge the heroes, expose the true villains, and ensure our beloved City of Metropolis recovers as quickly as possible.



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Notes on the destruction seen in the movie “Man of Steel”

Analyzing the magnitude of the damage caused by the climactic battle scenes in *Man of Steel*, presented a somewhat different challenge as compared to our previous review of *The Avengers*. Foremost among these is that Metropolis is an entirely fictional city – other than Stark Tower, the New York City of *The Avengers* is essentially our Big Apple. While *Man of Steel* was filmed in Chicago, Metropolis is widely taken to be an analog of New York, with New Troy being the island of Manhattan.

After viewing the movie and using maps of Metropolis available on-line from a variety of official and fan sources, we ran analyses of the World Engine ground zero in two different locations: central Manhattan, and central Chicago (center near W. Madison and Canal). It appears from the movie that Zod’s “World Engine” caused total devastation for a radius of approximately one mile in diameter, with damage decreasing rapidly with distance beyond that. This level of impact is similar to an air burst from a 20kt nuclear explosion, but without the associated radiation or thermal effects. This is in contrast with *The Avengers*, where much of the damage was spectacular but superficial (well, aside from the buildings crushed by giant space centipedes). The level of destruction and loss of life from *Man of Steel* was on an entirely different level from *The Avengers* – as much as \$2 Trillion dollars in total impacts (as opposed to the \$168 Billion found in the earlier movie).

We felt a bit conflicted about doing another one of these analyses – especially one that tallied the potential casualties from a clearly horrific event. After all, we are a serious group of researchers doing important, even life saving work. Thus we decided to take the approach of an “in universe” editorial as written by the editor of the Daily Planet rather than a report issued on company letterhead. We also wanted to make a point about fictional damage and entertainment. Certainly conflict and destruction have been essential elements of storytelling since the dawn of time. But as video and movie productions become increasingly realistic, there is perhaps some risk that viewers will become a bit numbed to the real world consequences of leveling a crowded city. The falling and disintegration of the buildings in *Man of Steel* were eerily reminiscent of the collapse of the World Trade Center towers. While the staff of the fictional Daily Planet can dramatically escape such events, most people would not be so lucky. We don’t want to diminish the enjoyment of the movie, or take ourselves too seriously, but it is worthwhile to keep in mind you can’t have this level of destruction without serious consequences, especially in human terms.

Credits:

Mr. White would like to thank Mr. Chuck Watson, Director of R&D, and Ms. Sara Jupin, Research Scientist, Kinetic Analysis Corporation (not to be confused with the odious opportunists of LexCorp’s Kinetic Assessment Cartel). He would also like to thank Dr. Mark Johnson, Professor of Statistics, University of Central Florida, for his insightful analysis of the “Battle of Smallville”. Questions on this report may be sent to research1@methaz.org. Some additional comments and notes on the study are at <http://satblog.methaz.org/>

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