

THE REEL TRUTH

by Chris Vessey

Superman is an "American" tradition. We've all seen the previous Superman movies and I will agree, most of them didn't have the greatest of plots, but the special effects were usually pretty neat. And they did attract large numbers of people, both young and mature. I had expected this to be no exception.

I can only say one thing about this movie, but it doesn't deserve even that. This is the worst Superman movie ever.

The basic premise of the story is pretty easy — Superman is the great hero he always was. We see him do a few of his good deeds at the open of the flick. We also get to see the action around the Daily Planet, as it faces a makeover by the radical daughter of the major shareholder in the paper. The Planet, the Pillar of Metropolis, is reduced to little more than a cheap scandal rag.

But amongst all this a small, worried class of primary schoolers assembles in their class, and they discuss their fears of the dreaded nuclear war. One little fellow decides that the thing to do is to ask Superman to

rid the world of all nuclear weapons, and that will fix everything.

Of course, Superman refuses (he isn't supposed to "interfere" with Earth culture). So the new Planet blows it out of proportion, basically making a baddie out of Superman (something like "Superman tells kid to Take a Hike"). Of course, the big S has to save face by flying down to the press conference that this little kid has been invited to and pledge to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

And so he starts. Collecting missiles as they are launched. This is interesting, because if he does this then he is not actually getting any nuclear weapons. The majority of the tested rockets are merely dummy vehicles, and are not armed (most of the warhead tests take place underground). Anyhow, he does take from both the Americans and Soviets. He puts them into a big metal net (that's right, a net), and does your basic spin-throw of large objects and sends them into the Sun (where, miraculously, the live to impact its surface and burst out a neat yellow prominence).

In comes Lex Luthor.

This week:



Hackman does a neat job on this, as he is about the only really good actor in the movie. His nephew Lenny has since sprung him from prison, and now he has stolen a museum exhibit - Superman's hair that can hold a ton. He plans to clone himself a Superman. Just mix some chemicals, make a 'protoplasm' that looks gross, and attach it to a nuclear missile. Superman will chuck it and the missile into the Sun and *POOF* instant Nuclear Man.

Now this guy is the dumbest yet. He badly needs a manicure and a vocabulary. He's a solar powered Superman, all right. The rest of the movie is the big chase between the big S and Nukie Boy. But, it turns out that when the lights go down, Nuclear Man is just a big softie. That's his only weakness.

I will be frank. I did not like this movie very much. I had expected at least some good effects, but was disappointed even at this prospect. The flight sequences were tacky, and there was little-to-no nifty graphic effects. The only actor that really had to

do any acting was Hackman - Hemingway and Kidder were almost like Barbie dolls. And you have

the usual playup of Clark Kent's (Reeve's) geekiness, and the little 'slip' of his actual power.

Perhaps this was a quick attempt at keeping up with the other "Big IV" movies, to try to maintain some semblance of decency. Or maybe it is just another Superman movie, except this happens to be particularly poorly made. Either way, I am very disappointed. For the life of me, I can't figure out why they'd do this to themselves, considering their previous successes.

I don't think this is a movie value, even on cheap seat night. I think that if you are a Superman fan, this will severely tarnish your interest. I can only hope that the words I write will assist you in not wasting a maximum of \$5.50 this week. I will use the old rating system of last year: *

It wasn't a complete BOMB, but very, very close to it. See you next week. ■

The GEM FILM PROJECTIONS

GEM film rating guide:
BOMB - Self explanatory.

* - Extremely bad. You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll kiss five fifty goodbye.

*+ - Not much better. Only if you have lots and lots of money to waste.

** - Mediocre. Your money can be better spent.

**+ - You've already seen it. The material is overworked, but if you like remakes...

*** - Average. It's OK, but definitely not a blockbuster.

***+ - Not bad. The film has some decent (or indecent, according to preference) parts.

**** - Pretty good. Relatively new material, good theme and coherency. Show delivers what it promises.

****+ - Exceptionally good. Quality matched by few. You need not feel guilt blowing \$5.50 on this one.

***** - Totally awesome. Absolutely colossal. Mega-cosmic (look, you think up some valley-girl expressions for this, willya?)

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