

Must See TV? Not As Much

I am all for the reinterpretation of a popular character over time to make him more appealing to the masses, but I have found one such instance a bit beyond what I consider plausible. I speak of the up-coming 8th season of *Smallville*. It not only seems that most of the traditional [Superman](#) canon is a MAJOR part of the young adult life of Clark Kent, but it seems that most of them know of his "secret." Over the last two seasons, both Lois Lane and Jimmy Olsen were introduced to the series as recurring characters which would be entirely understandable IF it were a series about the ADULT life of Clark after he had assumed the guise of the superhero. Last season, The Man of Steel's arch-enemy Lex Luthor discovered the truth about Clark. There have been some interesting action-packed episodes with guest appearances of future [Justice League](#) members [Green Arrow](#), [The Flash](#), [Aquaman](#), [Martian Manhunter](#), [Cyborg](#), and [Black Canary](#). However, I think the show's creators may have driven the final nail in the coffin. For season eight, the monstrous destructive force known as [Doomsday](#) will be introduced. Instead of the inhuman monster who was responsible for killing the Last Son of Krypton, a troubled young man will eventually transform into the character. The new addition will also be involved in a love triangle with Jimmy and his girl friend. GREAT... more twenty-something angst. I think that it is high time that the BOY of steel grew up. I think it will be interesting how they plan to explain a way in which everyone who knows Clark's secret will forget it (aside from the Kents, [Pete Ross](#), and Lana Lang).

Science Court

Back to middle school, thankfully. Not many would actually say middle school is an improvement over younger grades, but it is over yesterday's special needs preschool classroom. In any event, I mostly enjoy middle school though there are **those days** of course. Science was the subject, and will be tomorrow as well since this is a two-day assignment. Today's repeated middle school lesson, only four times at least instead of six, was a video (surprise, surprise). This video was one of several [Squigglevision/Science Court](#) episodes. This series uses the really bad (in my opinion) [Squigglevision](#) method of animation and is about two lawyers who battle against each other over some science fact, one science-challenged and one who basically does the teaching and (you guessed it) always wins the case. There were some funny moments, and it was entertaining. However for education it seems like they could have put more content in there. For a half-hour show (commercials were included, yikes!) it really could have said much more about the topic at hand, which by the way was work. Not that one episode necessarily defines the series, mind you- I haven't seen any other episodes. The students just started a unit on simple machines and this video taught the [scientific definition of work](#). In it they also talked about a few simple machines that would make the work seem easier by increasing the distance moved (work = force \times distance, so increasing distance will decrease force if the work the same). We wrapped up after the video with a short discussion and a few minutes of silent ball.

If Squigglevision sounds familiar, it may be because of one of the other shows produced using this patented method. I specifically remember a show called [Home Movies](#) back in 1999. I'll tell you, I watched one episode of this show and that was enough for me. One of the drawbacks of Squigglevision animation is the lack of fluid, well, animation. Squiggly

outlines are in abundance but the animation of the characters and whatnot is just lacking. Case in point is the entrance of a character. Rather than appearing a little at a time to show fluid motion, the character will just all of a sudden just be there. One frame not there at all, next frame, **bam** there he is. This is part of the reason I really disliked the show. The other was I just didn't care for the premise. All in all I found the show to be quite a snooze. So, when the show creators switched to [Flash animation](#) for the second season I still did not switch back.

Anyway, back to school. You may have noticed I wrote that I only had to do this lesson four times. The reason for this is: 1) this is the school that has tutorial for one of the periods (some students do a foreign language instead of tutorial), and 2) at this school each core teacher does one social studies class. Why they don't have a dedicated social studies teacher is a mystery, probably budgeting. So for social studies they just colored pictures of African masks. All period. Well, you wanted to know, right? ☐

A Hero In All Of Us

Superhero teamups among characters of both DC and Marvel universes are quite common. In the 70s-lates 80s there was the "Superfriends." More recently, a Justice League series was produced on Cartoon Network. Even crossovers between the rival comic franchises have occurred. [Superman and Spider-Man](#) have crossed paths in comic book form.

I just watched the new direct to DVD feature Justice League: New Frontier. It told the tale of one of the first times heroes such as the aforementioned Man of Steel, Batman, and

Wonder Woman collaborated with other crimefighters like Green Lantern, Martian Manhunter, and the Flash.

What I appreciated most about the film is that it was set during the 1950-60s when the silver age of comic books was beginning. The costumes reflected the period (Superman's crest was a red "S" on a black background and Wonder Woman wore a star-spangled skirt instead of the more familiar, without sounding too blunt, briefs). Some of the themes revealed in the movie also were indicative of the time: McCarthyism, the Ku Klux Klan, communism, and fear of alien invasion were all issues portrayed.

I was also pleased with the role of the less familiar players. The Flash particularly felt that he would never be able to make as big a difference when put up alongside characters like Superman. However, the fastest man alive contributes in a huge way in combating the seemingly invincible force threatening to destroy humanity.

If there is a flaw with New Frontier, it is the choice of Jeremy Sisto to voice the Dark Knight. Each of the other characters had voices that fit but there was something strange about Batman's. Also, something that has always bothered me about the Justice League series: can Wonder Woman fly or not? It would seem unnecessary for her to have an invisible jet (a la the live-action series and "Superfriends") if that were the case. A friend also pointed out that when shapeshifter J'onn J'onzz is knocked unconscious would he not revert to his martian appearance? Discuss.