



**Action Comics #20**  
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*Action Comics*  
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**A Crisis tie-in**  
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Headline: **JL VS AMERICA**

Editorial

As most of the world knows, Superman along with his fellow members of The Justice League has been deemed fugitives and criminals by the United States government. As a veteran and as an American I find it disgraceful that these so called heroes have yet to turn themselves in. Instead, they have gone into hiding or worse simply ignore the President's order and our law enforcement officials' attempts to bring them in. For years we have tolerated their presence and accepted their attempts at subjugation thinly veiled as "help" for the poor normal humans who cannot run at the speed of sound or spit fire from their eyes. I applaud our government's initiative to finally take a stand against these aliens and mistakes of nature, and encourage all of the citizens of Metropolis and the world to stand up for humanity. Should anyone know of the whereabouts of any member of the Justice League do not hesitate to call your local law enforcement. This great metropolitan newspaper will no longer be a masthead for the proliferation of propaganda for the Kryptonian alien. The Daily Planet, myself and the planets staff of award winning reporters such as Lois Lane and Clark Kent will not rest until these criminals are apprehended.

Perry White  
Editor-In Chief

“What the hell is this?” Lois threw the paper down on Perry’s desk.

“It’s a newspaper Lane and if you realized that maybe your byline would have been on the front page at least once this month.” Perry replied without looking up from the copy he was reading.

“This editorial, Perry how can you say those things?” Lois leaned over his desk.

Perry didn’t look up from the copy. “It’s an **editorial** Lane; I have the right in an editorial to write my opinion, you however tend to do it in your articles. The only thing that’s missing in your articles about Superman are little hearts over the ‘I’s.”

Lois slammed her fist down on the desk, “Perry White you look at me!”

Perry slowly raised his head from the copy. His eyes were glassy, a touch of red crept in around the corners.

“Perry, you look terrible, is there something wrong?”

“I’m fine Lane.” Perry stood. Lois never realized before how imposing he could be. “There’s a protest going on now at the Justice League Headquarters get down there and cover it. Now get the hell out of my office”, he pointed toward the door.

Lois shocked and dazed by Perry’s attitude turned absent-mindedly toward the door.

“Oh and take Kent with you, at least his articles report the facts without sounding like a school girl crush.” Perry said after her.

Lois stopped for a moment and contemplated turning around, then she saw Kent waving at her from across the newsroom.

Perry watched as Lois flew her hands in the air and shoved today’s Planet onto Clark’s chest. Clark just stood there smiling at her and pushed his glasses back up his nose. They entered the elevator together, and Perry took a sip of his coffee from the cup on the desk. It was cold. He flung the cup against the inner glass wall the cup shattered and coffee crawled

down the glass in a large dark stain. He clicked a button on the intercom. "Sarah, find Olsen, I want him in my office now and bring me another cup of coffee!" Perry clicked off the intercom and rubbed the back of his neck. "Incompetents" he muttered.

Even in Metropolis, the cleanest city on earth, the cabs smelled like urine.

"You don't reckon Perry is on drugs or something do you Lois?" Clark asked.

"I don't reckon? Reckon. What is that smallville some sort of mid-western cowboy talk?" Clark started to answer but Lois cut him off. "I don't know Clark, all I know is something is very wrong, you read that editorial. That's not at all like Perry."

"I don't know Lois, this thing with the government and the JLA really have a lot of people questioning where there loyalties lie."

"Clark Kent, you know as well as I do that Superman and Perry have some sort of quasi-father/son relationship. That editorial is going to cut into Superman's heart as much as if Perry drove a piece of kryptonite through it."

Clark turned and looked out through the cab window. "I know," he mumbled.

Alex Trent sat in his cell; his head throbbed from the beating he had just gotten in the yard. The guards took their own sweet time in breaking it up. When the air shimmered in front of him he thought it was from a concussion. His Bloodsport costume appeared from the shimmering and fell to the floor. Trent didn't move for five minutes, afraid that he was dreaming. His foot slowly reached out from where he sat and scooted the costume under his bunk. Ten minutes later when he was sure no one was looking, Alex Trent put on the white costume with a red cross emblazoned across it and vanished into shimmering air.

Jimmy Olsen showed his press pass to the guard at Star Labs.

“Hello there Olsen, it’s been a while what brings you around?” The guard took his camera laid in the tray and pushed it to the other side of the large walkthrough metal detector and waved him through

“Chief wants me to get some pics of the new hydrogen engine.” Jimmy walked through the large archway.

“Ok, you know where to go, energy research is in level 3. Here’s your pass.”

Jimmy clipped the pass to his shirt. “Thanks Todd, see ya on the flip side.”

Professor Periwinkle stood beside his hydrogen engine. “Like this? Mr. Olsen?”

“Yeah, *cough*, that’s it.” Jimmy answered.

“I guess the high fuel prices have renewed interest in my engine, huh?”

“*Cough*, I don’t know, *cough cough*, I just take pictures. How about removing your lab coat, show more of the man instead of the scientist. ”

Professor Periwinkle removed his lab coat and folded it neatly in a table and adjusted his tie. “Should I expect a call from a reporter?”

“I don’t, *cough cough*, know. I told you I’m just here, to take, *cough cough*, a picture. Which I can’t do very well with this cough would you mind getting me a drink? Something fruity usually helps.”

“Sure, something fruity. I’ll be right back, may take me a minute, I’ll have to go to the cafeteria.”

“Take your time, I’m in no hurry.” Jimmy said as the Professor left the room. He waited for a minute and then unfolded periwinkles lab coat and put it on. He slowly opened the door making sure Periwinkle wasn’t coming back yet then quickly walked to the elevator and made his down to level five. At the end of a long corridor Jimmy took the professor’s magnetic ID card and swiped it into the door marked K-STORAGE

## RADIATION DANGER.

Jimmy replaced Periwinkles lab coat and made his way back to the lobby.

“Get what you need Jimmy?” Todd asked as he took Jimmy’s camera and slid it to the other side of the counter.

Jimmy walked through and picked up his camera on the other side clutching it tightly to him. “I sure did Todd, I sure did.”

The Hall of Justice, the Headquarters for the now beleaguered Justice League sparkled like a jewel in the afternoon sun. The force field, one of Batman’s many security systems, that held back the protesters refracted the suns rays and rippled like water each time a rock or a bottle bounced off its impenetrable skin.

They held signs reading ALIENS LEAVE EARTH, HERO = ZERO, NOT ABOVE THE LAW, and others. They chanted “JLA YOU WILL PAY! JLA YOU WILL PAY! JLA YOU WILL PAY!” Their protests rang throughout the empty Hall of Justice. Government agents surrounded the building as closely as the force field allowed waiting and watching for any members that tried to enter, but none budged to stop the protesters from hurling either insults or rocks.

The cab came to a stop a block from the protesters. “This is as far as I go. Any damage to the cab comes out of my pocket.” The driver said. Lois and Clark exited the cab, each on their own side by the time Clark stepped out, Lois was already halfway across the block leaving him to pay the fare.

“Here you go, keep the change.” Clark handed the cabby a twenty.

Lois waded into the angry crowd. She listened and noted pieces of conversations for filler in the article. “... ask that alien to come here anyway ... , ... never trusted them ... , ... just proves what the bugle has said all along ... , ... disappeared too... , ...even turned the ones from here..., ... agree with Daily Planet ... , ... working together...”

In front of her a woman screamed and hoisted her sign up and down.

Lois tapped her on the shoulder. "Excuse me, my name is Lois Lane from the Daily Planet, can I talk to you a minute about what you're doing here?"

"Absolutely", the woman replied. "It's about time the press got here, we have ... hey, wait a minute, did you say Lois Lane? Hey! Here's Superman's girlfriend Lois Lane!" The woman shouted. Nearby protesters heard her and soon all eyes were on Lois.

"Look I'm not his girlfriend, that's just what the tabloids have... " "Use her to flush him out!" Someone shouted. FLUSH HIM OUT, FLUSH HIM OUT they started to chant. Hands came from nowhere and grabbed her. "C'mon call him out. Let's see if the coward will come save you now."

"Get your hands off me!" Lois pulled away from the hand that had her arm but it was quickly replaced by another.

Clark could only watch as the crowd of people tightened around Lois.

Clark had been trying to keep a low profile since this started by using a super-speed rescue to fast to be seen, a blast of heat-vision from the upper atmosphere to disarm a gun, but there were too many people here to try and pull Lois out with super-speed. Not to mention the possible damage to Lois. Clark began to back away from the crowd, across the street he removed his glasses, took one last look around to make sure no one was noticing him and ducked into the alley.

Nearby the air shimmered and Alex Trent stepped into Metropolis. "This ain't where I was wantin' ta go. What the hell?" Trent was on the roof of a building he could hear the chanting of the protestors. "What the hell is that?"

"Release Miss. Lane and step away." Superman's voice didn't rise above a conversational tone, but everyone in the crowd heard him. He hung in the air above them suspended as a slight breeze rippled the edge of his red cape. For a brief moment the protestors stood silent. Their anger and fear momentarily forgotten when faced with the power and confidence that Superman exudes.

Suddenly a beam of energy caught Superman square in the back sending him hurtling toward the JLA headquarters. He bounced off the shield and landed at the feet of the government agents where he found himself looking down the barrel of some sort of energy weapon. "Superman, you are under arrest by order of the President of the United States." Superman noticed that it wasn't that particular weapon that was pointed at him that was fired.

Clark was a wanted fugitive, he couldn't change that. The presidential order had been given. These men were merely doing the job they had been assigned. He hated being on the other side of the law. Jonathon and Martha Kent had given Clark many life lessons through how they lived their own life. One of those was when Jonathon and a group of farmers opposed a Smallville city sanction land sell for the new interstate. The old quarry would have to be drained and blasted and they were concerned about the damage that would do to the water table. They stood their ground and won, the new interstate went elsewhere without doing any damage. Later, Clark noticed his father talking and joking with one of the city council members. "I thought you and him were enemy's pa?" Clark asked. "Enemies? Land-o-goshen no, son. Ben Hubbard is my best friend. Why would you think that?"

"You and he were fighting over that interstate thing."

"Clark, sometimes the people who we want to run stuff for us, do things we don't think are right. When that happens you have to question it and get everybody's opinion to figure out what's best for everybody."

"But pa, he's a city councilman"

"You're right son, and as such he deserves our respect but not our unquestioning loyalty."

"How will I know when to ask a question pa?"

"Trust your instincts son; don't ever do anything that someone tells you to do if it doesn't feel right. And you can always come to me." Jonathon tousled Clark's black curly hair.

Clark sure wished his father was here now.

He reached up and crimped the end of the weapon with his fingers.

"I'm sorry, gentlemen but I can't comply right now." Superman started to stand as the other agents were rushing toward him their weapons drawn but they weren't pointed at him, they were pointed back toward the crowd.

Another barrage of energy flashed over the man of steel. The agents were thrown backward seared by the intensity of the blast. With a quick sweep of x-ray vision he checked the agents. They were badly burned but they would live. He turned back toward the crowd.

Bloodsport stood in the middle of a ring of people.

"Bloodsport." Superman said as he stood to his full height, despite the pain that the energy was inflicting on him. "What was he using?" He wondered. "I have to keep him from firing again so I can get a good look at it." Superman thought.

"What are you doing here." Clark goaded.

"Oh come on now you didn't really think I would miss an anti-Superman rally now do you.? Bloodsport fired the weapon again. This time Superman dodged taking to the air flying in an arc over Bloodsport. The energy splashed harmlessly against the JLA's forcefield.

As he flew over Clark focused on the weapon, he shifted his perception and the layers peeled away. It was crystalline in structure, he recognized it as kryptonian.

Clark shifted again, narrowing his visual range as he landed, the weapon began to heat up as he poured on the heat vision.

"Oh no you don't!" Bloodsport said as both he and the weapon vanished into shimmering air.

Superman stood still, his eyes closed. He pushed his hearing down

below the audible range listening for the pressure wave that would be generated by Bloodsport teleporting his mass into an area where mass already existed. The protesters thought something was wrong until a second later he opened his eyes and said. "There."

A second later when he reappeared, on top of the building across the street with a larger nastier looking weapon mounted on his forearm Bloodsport barely had time to fire before Superman grabbed him and wrenched the weapon from him.

The weapon had fired and superman turned to see a ball of blue energy almost on the protesters. In less than a second he overtook the energy mass, cutting in front of it he removed his cape from the hooks under his shirt and stretched it around the ball of energy.

"Can't risk letting this hit me or anything else, after what happened to the agents. I'll have to redirect it." He thought. Then pulling the four corners of the cape around it he pulled it off its trajectory, releasing the ends of his cape he slung it directly at the JLA HQ. The energy ball slammed into the force field, energy crackled and splayed out over the HQ like a spider web of electricity. "Thanks Katar", superman whispered under his breath.

Superman looked around, telescopic, x-ray, infrared, magnetic, no trace of bloodsport on any wave length. The protestors had all ran, the few that remained were now noticeably silent.

"Superman!" Lois called as she ran up to him. "What just happened here?"

"I don't know Miss Lane, Bloodsport seems to have upgraded his weaponry and taken advantage of this protest to try them out." He clipped his cape back into his shirt.

"Any comment on the presidential order." Lois asked.

"I'm sorry Miss Lane, I cannot. I will however say that I will do my best to protect the citizens of Metropolis and the world until such time as I am no longer able to do so. Goodbye Miss Lane." Superman floated into the air slowly at first and then with a blur he was gone. Clark came running across the street towards Lois.

“Lois, are you OK?” He called to her.

“I’m fine no thanks to you. Where did you disappear to?”

“I uh, couldn’t get through the crowd, then Superman showed up and Bloodsport started shooting. With everything that’s happened lately, I uh guess I had a little panic attack.”

“Kent, as long as I live I don’t think I will ever figure you out. I’m going back to the office and file this story. You can go do whatever you want.” Lois turned and stormed away.

“Ok Lois, see ya later.” Clark called after her. “I have a meeting of my own to attend.” He thought.

Thank goodness that was over Clark thought as he approached his apartment building. Skulking about in the shadows was a Bruce thing, he hated it. Flying was one of his most passive powers but it was the one that gave him the most pleasure, being unbound by gravity, watching the world roll past beneath him, it was peaceful, and if there were anything he needed after the last few days it was some peace. He did a quick x-ray scan of the building to make sure there were no surprises waiting for him.

“Aww shoot.” He thought, Lois was knocking on the door.

He opened the door to his apartment, and looked at Lois Lane as she entered. She didn’t say ‘Hi, how you been?’, but instead: “Where have you been, Smallville?”

Clark shrugged nonchalantly. “Nowhere. Asleep.”

She looked around awkwardly, and then continued. “Perry’s been asking for you. I told him you’d be back when you’re up to it.”

“I know. It’ll be soon, I think. I might fly back to Smallville, I don’t know—”

She looked at him, a fierce look in her eye. “You shouldn’t be doing

anything strenuous, not after your injury..." Her words trailed off.

Clark nodded in agreement. For all she knew, beneath this shirt and tie was a barely healed bullet wound, caused by his taking one from an assassin, who'd had Lois' death on his agenda.

"I'll be fine. I'm a quick healer. Like my Pa..." He grimaced. "Anyway, anything new happen in the world of news since I left? Any news on the Justice League? On Superman?"

Lois shrugged her shoulders exasperatedly. "Nothing. No word from Superman, no word from any of them."

"Can I get you a drink?"

"Sure."

There was a knock at the door. "Can you get that?"

She laughed. "Sure!" He headed into the kitchenette and then paused. He recognised the heartbeats behind the door. Perry and Jimmy. There was something strange though. He heard something else. A *flutter* of something else? He tensed slightly. He was not a paranoid man, by any means. But... their heartbeats were strange. Rhythmic. Together. Together exactly! Which was virtually impossible. He put down the jug of coffee, and hurried into the lounge. Lois was at the door, and she was about to open it.

"NO!" He moved her out of the way, and then gunshots rattled through the door, wood splintering and plaster crumbling.

***KABLAM! KABLAM!***

"Something's wrong!" A fist punched through the splintered doorframe, and Clark recognized it as Perry's. "Something's very wrong!"

Perry swung his bloody knuckles at Clark. Clark intended to let him connect but roll with it to avoid crushing Perry's hand further, but something slowed Clark down and Perry connected for real. The blow

sent Clark reeling, crashing to the floor.

“Perry! Jimmy!” Lois screamed. “What are you doing?”

Jimmy grabbed Lois around the neck and placed the gun to her head.

“Soooppeerrrrmmaannn” Jimmy spoke as if his mouth were full of tar.

Lois brought her elbow back into Jimmy’s Solar plexus knocking the breath from him. She grabbed his hand that held the gun and brought his wrist crashing down onto the end table. Several bones snapped. “Gaaaahhh”, Jimmy cried out in pain and dropped the gun. Perry was standing over Clark about to hit him again Lois smashed the end table across his back.

“How’s that for a dot above your eye.”

Perry slumped to the floor. Clark groaned. Not that Clark would be any help normally but with his injuries, he was even less. Lois thought. “Clark, get out! Go contact Superman!”

Clark stumbled to his feet. What did Perry hit him with, what was going on he wondered. “Lois I don’t ... ” Jimmy was stirring.

“Clark, this is no time to play dumb! Go!” Lois pushed Clark out the front door.

Did Lois know about him he wondered? Time to worry about that later he flew threw the window at the end of the hall, shed his Clark clothes and flew around the building and in the open window. As soon as he was back in the apartment he began to feel weak. Jimmy was now awake and he and Lois struggled for the gun. A pinpoint blast of super breath blew Jimmy back against the wall hard and he collapsed in a heap on the floor.

“Superman look out!” Lois shouted.

Superman turned as Perry came barreling down upon him. Perry caught him under the chin with his forearm and pushed him back against the wall. “Why am I suddenly so weak”, Superman wondered. He began to

sweat as Perry pushed harder choking him. Superman got his foot up on Perry's chest and pushed. Perry stumbled backwards and fell over the couch. He scrambled as he fell and his hands flew open. The small quarter size sliver of Kryptonite he held in his right hand flew out and skittered to the floor.

"Lois." She didn't have to wait for further instructions. She grabbed the sliver from the floor, no time to think she pitched it out the window as far as she could. Perry ran toward her hands outstretched intent on wrapping them around her throat. With a blur Superman was standing in front of her. He grabbed Perry by both hands and held him. Perry squirmed, but now with the Kryptonite removed he could only struggle as Superman held him fast. He looked at Perry; the man who like Lois had said was so much a father figure to him even more so after the death of Jonathon. Perry face was twisted with rage. Superman looked past it. His vision peeled back the skin, the muscles, the bone, his brain. There attached to the skin on the back of his neck, some kind of small star shaped parasite with tendrils reaching into his brain.

Superman spun him around and with a small low amplitude zap of heat vision the small layer of skin and the parasite went up in smoke.

Perry collapsed into Superman's arms.

A quick exam of Jimmy revealed another creature, zap, it was gone.

The phone rang. Lois and Superman exchanged a glance. "Answer it." Lois said. "It might be Clark, I sent him out looking for you."

So she didn't know, Clark breathed a mental sigh of relief.

He picked up the receiver.

He listened for a second, Lois was attending to Perry and Jimmy, and they were coming around.

"Batman, now isn't a good time—" he whispered.

Suddenly a voice filled Clark's head. "*Friends, I have grave news! J'onn!*"

The line went dead.

Superman stepped back into the living room. "Was that Clark", Lois asked. "Uh no, telemarketer, Lois I have to go can you handle this here?"

"Is this somehow connected to what's going on with the League?"

"I don't know for sure Lois, but I'm going to find out." Lois recognized that tone of voice. It was more than a statement it was a point of fact. Superman stopped at the window and turned back to Lois.

"Lois, take care of them, and be careful."

"I will."

He was gone.

Alex Trent woke up, a tray of food sat before him. He sat up in bed. He looked around at what appeared to be a lavish bedroom. He walked across to the food tray. A neatly folded note sat on top of it.

He opened it.

Thanks. I'll be in touch.

**WPS**

*END*

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