

STEEL

THE SPOTLIGHT

Cavill keeps it real as new Superman

Story by **DERRIK J. LANG** • The Associated Press

Photo illustration by **R. SCOTT HELMCHEN** • Northwest Herald

With his dark eyebrows deeply furrowed and gleaming white teeth firmly clamped shut, Henry Cavill winces when asked if Superman is treated like a terrorist in “Man of Steel.” His reaction is somewhat understandable. The charming British actor should feel very protective of the character – one of the biggest icons in pop culture. Besides, Henry Cavill is Superman now.

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It’s a fair question though, given that Cavill’s Superman, his bulky frame encased in a deep-blue rendition of the Superman uniform, is handcuffed and attacked by the military at certain points in the retelling of the superhero’s origin. While the idea of Superman as a threatening outsider has been explored in other mediums, it’s new to the big screen.

“In the previous movies, it was just kind of accepted that he was a superhuman, but what would happen if this dude really did exist?” Cavill said. “If he was discovered, he would probably be put in a room and experimented on. That’s very clear in his choices throughout the movie. He’s become very adept at being who he is – but just not so openly.”

“Man of Steel” centers on an adult Clark Kent – or Kal-El, as he’s known back on his home planet of Krypton – at the inception of his superheroic identity. (The name Superman is actually only uttered a couple of times in the film.) It’s a matter-of-fact account of how a much more hesitant Clark rises up and responds when earth is threatened by Kryptonian outcasts.

At the beginning of “Man of Steel,” which opens today, this version of the character doesn’t wear spectacles, work at The Daily Planet, soar through the skies or own any clothes with a giant S plastered across the chest. He’s a drifter. He says more with actions than words, something the 30-year-old star of 2011’s “Immortals” completely understands.

“As an actor, you spend a lot of time alone,” Cavill said. “You travel the world by yourself. You don’t have your buddies that you see on the weekend or at the office every day. You make temporary families, and you can only see your friends between jobs. I’m actually not a naturally super-chatty person. It’s a skill I’ve had to teach myself.”

With an emphasis on folksy imagery instead of high-flying action, early “Man of Steel” footage suggested a darker take on the superhero.



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