

## **NIGHT-MERIKA OR SUPERBOY TAKES A FLYER**

To all those who thought 2020 was *annus horribilus*, I offer you 2026. Donald Trump, who all the smart people thought had been left rotting in a ditch somewhere, has in fact turned out to be harder to kill than Rasputin. He's been re-elected President, and is crushing his opponents.

On the campaign trail, Orange Julius Ceasar committed to his disaffected rabble all necessary action to ensure that "America is for Americans." As a result, he has increased dramatically the search for 'aliens', who, once discovered, are to be placed in cages, then returned to their native country. But what if one alien doesn't have a country, because he came from space? Yes, folks, Superboy is living a quiet life on the Kents' farm in Kansas. Or he was...until he was betrayed. But by whom?

Oddly enough, the Kents aren't apoplectic about their adopted son when the nasty ICEmen cometh to take him away. They know his powers – he'll be back.

Let's step away from Kansas, and head to Mar-a-Lago, for a glimpse of what the most highly placed MAGA-nates are planning. We quickly learn that we were underestimating whatever bad things we thought they were planning. The chief herder of these nasty cats is The Director, a man whose only guiding principle is to have none. And guess who turns up at scene's end?

Back to the outskirts of Smallville. What's this? The Kents, and a curious collection of locals, are doing what they can to provide shelter, food and some degree of comfort to unfortunates forced to flee their violence-torn countries.

Sandra is one of the Kents' most dedicated volunteers. She also works for Immigration & Customs Enforcement [ICE], the federal agency which is responsible for alien round-up. She does everything she can to blunt her employer's endeavours, and as a software professional, is uniquely positioned to do so.

However, Sandra too is betrayed (or so she thinks) by a friend of her sycophant boss. Instead, the erstwhile friend turns out to have an agenda of his own. He might be useful...

Meantime, we're learning more than we ever wanted about Donald's campaigning skills, and how The Director plans to ensure his man's term in the White House extends long past the time dictated by that tedious document, the U.S. Constitution. The Director's zealotry knows no bounds. We find him mixing business with pleasure, as the amoral spouse of a jailed Proud Boy cozies up to him. She's on a fast track at the IRS, and wants his help to advance even further. He's happy to use his influence, in return for certain favours...

And speaking of ambition, Sandra's boss Allen Golightly wants to put himself in a favourable light with The Director. When she tells Golightly that Superboy can't be returned to

his home planet of Krypton, because of the irksome news it's been blown up, he concocts (well, not really – he steals from Sandra) an earthbound solution so ingenious he's summoned to Washington to receive thanks from the man himself. Through a *faux pas*, we learn Orange Julius has recently become separated, and not by choice. He wants Melania back, and The Director is just the man to make it happen.

Back on the farm, Jonathan Kent is depressed. He 'thinks out loud' to Sandra about the need to leave and travel to Canada. The IRS is beating down his door, despite the fact it's his sister who lives in Canada who actually owes back taxes. Superboy has expressed a desire to build the Fortress of Solitude at the North Pole, so the family will merely be advancing his plans by a decade or so.

Now what? Will the Kents give up the farm, and abandon their refugees to the heartless minions of ICE? Will the local MAGA-nate pastor continue to get his palm greased, or can he somehow be gotten around? What about Sandra – will a chance connection with a handsome refugee (whose wife is missing) bring her happiness? And what does an obscure hobby like stamp-collecting, and a new FitBit application, have to do with any of these matters?

"Night-Merika" doesn't have a solution to turn back the tide of fascism. Instead the play offers humour, often absurdist, plus a glimpse of a nasty future unless these people are resisted mightily. And perhaps we might just manage to

find some hope among common folk. They can battle the bigoted and greedy to a draw. Let's watch.