

Capitol Punishment

The Miracle Worker: Super-K Tries Again

By Art Buchwald

For several years now, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has been portrayed in magazines and books as Superman. Whenever there was trouble in the world, Henry would dash into a phone booth near the White House, change into his blue body stocking costume and fly off to settle the matter.

It came as a shock the other day to hear Henry admit he was no longer Superman.

I was passing the phone booth and I saw Henry inside. "Good," I said to myself, "Henry's going to settle the oil crisis." I waited to see him fly out of the booth on his mission, but he just remained there.

"Henry," I finally said anxiously, "why haven't you changed into your costume?"

"I'm not going to be Superman any more," Henry said. "I'm sick and tired of working miracles."

"But, Henry, if you won't be Superman, what will we all do?"

"That's not my problem, being Superman means you have to travel a lot. I want to spend more time with Nancy."

"I can appreciate that," I told him, "but you have an image to uphold. The media made you what you are

today. You just can't go into a phone booth and say you're not coming out."

"Why should I come out?" Henry replied. "The House is picking on me; the Senate is picking on me; the press is picking on me. You know Supermen have feelings, too."

"You can't pay attention to criticism, Henry. If everyone loved you, you wouldn't be doing your job."

"Everyone used to love me," he said.

"Yes, but that's because they didn't like Nixon. You always looked so much better compared to him. Once he resigned, you were more or less on your own, and some people decided they loved you and some people decided they didn't."

"I think Superman should be loved by everybody," Henry said. "I don't mind criticism, if it's fair. What I don't like is unfair criticism."

"Nobody likes unfair criticism," I told him.

"I'm the first one to admit," he added, "that I'm not perfect."

"Nobody likes to be told they're not perfect, Henry. The thing to do is to rise above it and prove they're wrong. Now get into that silly costume and fly off to the Middle East and straighten out our problems."

"I'm not going to do it unless I have assurance that people will stop picking on me."

"You have my word, Henry. I'll make sure that there is not one line in the newspapers questioning any of your past actions."

Henry started taking off his pants.

"Okay," he said, "I'll do it one more time. But if I hear any squawks from anybody about what I did, it's the last time I go into this phone booth."

I held his pants while he took off his shirt.

"I don't know if I ever told you this, Henry," I said, "but you have lovely legs."

"Don't try to change the subject," he said as he took off his shoes and socks. This is everybody's last chance. If they don't like what I'm doing, let them get another Superman."

"They'll like it Henry," I assured him. "They'll like it."

And so last Tuesday as people looked up into the sky they saw a weird object. One person said "It's a bird"; another person said, "It's a plane," and then everyone cried out at once "No, it's Kissinger!" And we all slept better that night.