

= Lionel Luthor =

Lionel Luthor is a fictional character portrayed by John Glover in the television series *Smallville*. The character was initially a recurring guest in season one, and became a series regular in season two and continued until being written out of the show in season seven. The character returned to the show in season ten again as a recurring guest role as the Earth @-@ 2 version of the character. In *Smallville*, Lionel Luthor is the father of Lex Luthor (Michael Rosenbaum), and founder and CEO of LuthorCorp. Lex Luthor's father was first introduced in Superman comics by Jerry Siegel in 1961 and has since appeared in other Superman @-@ related media under different names. *Smallville* is the first appearance in which the character has been an intricate part of a Superman adaptation. Series developers Alfred Gough and Miles Millar created Lionel Luthor for *Smallville* to provide an antithesis to the parenting style of Jonathan Kent (John Schneider) and Martha Kent (Annette O'Toole).

During the story of *Smallville*, Lionel evolves from being a nemesis of Clark Kent (Tom Welling) who develops multiple schemes to uncover Clark's secrets, to becoming an ally who eventually dies to protect Clark's secret from his own son. Lionel has a strained relationship with Lex and regularly tries to test him. He attempts to develop a romantic relationship with Martha Kent following the death of Jonathan Kent, helping her advance toward the United States Senate.

Lionel's development from a main antagonist to an ally was difficult for the writers, who felt the character's arc failed to achieve the status they wanted. Although they continued with the story arc, Lionel returned to using deception to protect Clark rather than exploit him. He is characterized as a sinister character who tried hard to further his own ambitions. Lionel's relationship with his son has been likened to that of Harry Osborn and Norman Osborn from Spider @-@ Man comics.

= = Role in *Smallville* = =

In 1989, Lionel visits *Smallville* to buy the Ross Creamed Corn company immediately before a meteor shower occurs. Twelve years later during season one, Lionel exiles his son Lex Luthor (Michael Rosenbaum) to *Smallville* to run LuthorCorp's local fertilizer plant as a test. When Lex makes a profit for the first time in years, Lionel closes the plant and blames Lex's poor managerial skills. Lionel later confronts his son at the Luthor mansion when Lex tries to orchestrate an employee buyout to save the fertilizer plant. When strong winds force debris to smash through the mansion, Lionel is pinned under a fallen support beam and Lex hesitates to save his father. In Season two, Lex saves Lionel but loses his sight because of Lex's judgment to rush into surgery. Season two's first half shows Lionel as blind. Lex and Lucas Luthor (Paul Wasilewski) ? Lionel's illegitimate son ? devise a plan to uncover Lionel's deception; it is revealed that Lionel was blind but that his eyes healed and he intentionally neglected to tell anyone so he could watch how they acted around him. Season two's second half shows Lionel is aware of the Kawatche caves and tries to unlock the mysterious symbols there, to the dismay of Clark Kent (Tom Welling).

Season three revealed that Lionel conspired with Morgan Edge (Rutger Hauer) to murder Lionel's parents and use the insurance money to fund the start of LuthorCorp. Lionel has Lex committed to a mental institution, when his son discovers what Lionel did. When Chloe Sullivan (Allison Mack) discovers the truth, that evidence is used to assist Lex have Lionel arrested for his parents' murder. Season three also revealed why Lionel is angry with Lex; he blames his son for the death of his youngest son Julian Luthor, although Lex took the blame to protect the true killer, the mentally unwell Lillian Luthor (Alisen Down), Lionel's wife and Lex's mother. Lionel also learns that he has a terminal liver disease, which he divulges to Lex while awaiting arraignment.

Lionel is sentenced to prison for his parents' murder in season four. Lionel attempts to switch bodies with Lex using a stone from Clark's homeworld of Krypton but Clark intervenes and Lionel switches bodies with Clark instead. When he and Clark switch back, Lionel discovers his terminal liver disease is healed. Lionel is released from prison by Genevieve Teague (Jane Seymour), and begins searching for three stones of knowledge. During this quest, Lionel falls into a catatonic state after being uploaded with Kryptonian knowledge. Lionel recovers from his catatonic state in season

five when the Kryptonian artificial intelligence Jor El takes over his body to speak with Clark . With Jor El guiding him , Lionel begins helping Clark by making excuses for Clark 's behavior and unexplained disappearances throughout seasons five and six . Season seven revealed that Lionel and three other wealthy families formed the secret society called Veritas to protect an alien visitor known as the Traveler ( Clark ) . When the secret is uncovered , Lex murders his father , realizing he has been covering up the Traveler 's existence .

Season ten reveals that Tess Mercer ( Cassidy Freeman ) is Lionel 's illegitimate daughter . The same season also features a parallel universe where a version of the character found and adopted Clark 's counterpart as his adopted son raised to be a killer , favoring Clark 's counterpart over his own son in his reality . Clark visits this world and unintentionally allows for the alternate doppelganger to follow . Posing as his own doppelganger , Lionel tries to make amends when he attempts twice to bring " Alexander Luthor " / Conner Kent ( Lucas Grabeel ) , a hybrid clone of Clark and Lex that develops Clark 's powers , to his side but fails . Lionel also assumes control of LuthorCorp from Tess but loses the company when his daughter proves he is an imposter . At his nadir , Lionel is approached by the evil alien entity Darkseid . In the series finale , Lionel discovers Lex 's defective clones were grafted to create a perfect composite clone , but a compatible heart could not be found among the clones . Lionel tries to give Tess 's heart to Lex , but when Tess shoots Lionel and escapes . Lionel surrenders his soul to Darkseid , giving Lionel 's heart to restore Lex . Afterward , Darkseid possesses Lionel 's corpse to attack Clark , however , Clark destroy Lionel 's body , dispelling the threat posed by Darkseid .

= = Portrayal = =

Lionel Luthor was created by Alfred Gough and Miles Millar specifically for " Smallville " to provide a parallel to the Kents as an " experiment in extreme parenting " . The character Chloe Sullivan ( Allison Mack ) was also created for the show . Lex 's father has previously been depicted in other media .

Lionel Luthor is portrayed in the program by John Glover ; Glover said he appreciates the " clear canvas " he had to work with when developing his portrayal of Lionel . In season one , Glover traveled from New York to Vancouver every week while filming his scenes because he was already committed to stage appearances in New York at the time . When portraying the character 's struggle with terminal liver disease , Glover was inspired by a friend 's battle with cancer ; he said his friend was a " cheerleader to people " , who supported and boosted others when they were feeling bad . When Glover 's friend learned he had cancer he fought hard to get over it , but when he learned that it was terminal he went to bed and stopped eating until he died about ten days later . This helped Glover understand how someone powerful and full of life could commit suicide ? which Lionel prepares to do when he learns his illness is terminal .

= = Character development = =

= = = Storyline progression = = =

In season two , Lionel moves from being recurring figure to a regular character . This season features the gradual unveiling of Lionel 's increasing involvement with the characters of the show . It begins with more direct involvement when Luthor hires Martha Kent as his assistant , and then indirectly when he becomes the conservator of the Kawatche caves and tries to unlock the mystery of the symbols on the cave walls . During season three , Lionel becomes the villain of the show when he tries to discover Clark 's secret and drives Lex into a psychotic breakdown . This allows Lionel to use electroshock therapy on Lex to erase his knowledge of Lionel 's co -opting of Morgan Edge to kill Lionel 's parents for their life insurance . The creative team experimented with Lionel 's character in season four , creating a storyline in which Lionel is reformed . Executive producer Greg Beeman said the character development failed , and as a result Lionel returned to his

normal self . John Glover found playing Lionel as a straight arrow was " boring " .

Season five explores the relationship between Martha and Lionel . Both Annette O 'Toole and Al Gough said Lionel was slightly attracted to Martha , but that she would never act on that feeling . The producers had no intentions to create a romantic relationship between the two characters . Most of Lionel 's motivations in season five are shrouded in mystery . Glover said he could not determine whether his character is good or bad , so when he is portraying him in season five he tried to present everything as if it was " good " . Glover said he believes Lincoln Cole 's ( Ian Tracey ) actions in " Mercy " made Lionel rethink everything his past behavior and his own character . By the end of the fifth season , Lionel has learned that people have a responsibility to each other .

Smallville 's writer and executive producer Brian Peterson said the creative team wanted to remind the audience that Lionel was still the same Lionel Luthor they had come know , so they delayed revealing Lionel 's usual antics until season six 's " Promise " in which he blackmails Lana into marrying Lex . Peterson wanted to " slap [ the audience ] in the face " with a reminder of Lionel 's former character . Although Lionel blackmails Lana into marrying Lex , John Glover said Lionel was trying to protect Clark , for which he needed Lana 's help . By the time season six began airing , John Glover realized Lex was starting to become more villainous and that his time on the show would be limited . Glover hoped Lionel would still be able to influence his son as the show progressed ; he believed his character would be useless on the show without such influencing abilities . Glover said the conflict between Lex and his father is very positive for the show because Lionel 's attempt to bond with Lex and the distrust between them " makes drama " .

= = = Characterization = = =

John Glover characterizes Lionel as a businessman who is disappointed with his son . To Glover , Lionel is this " rich and powerful businessman " who sees his son as a " wuss " and " fraidy @-@ cat " . It was important to Glover that Lionel appear as human as possible ; Glover said he does not want to simply " twirl [ his ] mustache " . Glover described Lionel as a man who will do whatever he needs to do to get what he wants . He characterizes Lionel as an intelligent man who can read people easily . Lionel uses that ability to further his goals . The character can also get past people 's defenses and manipulate them . Glover thinks that type of power would be great if it could be used to help someone other than Lionel . Lionel 's character is also connoted by the color scheme that surrounds him ; the use of cold blue tones helps to evoke the " sinister " nature of the character . Lionel is also often portrayed in front of a white or " clinical blue " background . Lionel 's signature mane of hair is used to symbolize his power ? by growing it out and refusing to style it , Lionel attempts to show he is so powerful that he can do whatever he wants without any backlash .

= = = Relationships = = =

The relationship between Lionel and his son Lex is strained ; it has been likened to the relationship between Norman and Harry Osborn in the Spider @-@ Man movie . Glover tried to make Lionel appear as though he is trying to " toughen [ Lex ] up " . The character is made to " go out of his way , to give [ Lex ] tests , so [ Lex ] can prove himself " . Glover sees the character as a rich and powerful businessman who is disappointed in his son . Glover 's goal for season one was to show Lionel 's attempts to make Lex tougher ; he interprets the character 's motto in his raising of Lex as " no risk , no rewards " .

Glover believes Lionel has two competing agendas with Lex ? for Lex to become his own man and for Lex to follow in his father 's steps . This becomes frustrating for Lex because Lionel wants his son to be both " loyal follower " and the " best person he can be " . This all plays into Lionel 's " pretty huge ego " . John Glover believes if Lionel and Lex were not related Lionel would have " destroyed " Lex early on because he views his son as " weak " . Lionel is also bound by the fact that Lex is his heir , although he does not trust Lex . Lionel 's distrust of Lex partially arises because he believes Lex is a coward . John Glover said , " It 's not that [ Lionel is ] meant to be a foe ; it 's just that the poor boy 's weak , so [ Lionel must ] mold him . Lionel is continually trying to strengthen his

son , to teach him . [ Lex is ] just a hard student . "

Lionel also has a key relationship with Martha Kent , Clark Kent 's adoptive mother . This relationship first develops in season two when Lionel hires Martha to be his assistant ; it is further developed in season five . Glover felt Lionel 's attraction to Martha grows in season five when Jonathan Kent dies because he now sees Martha as a single woman and is now more attainable ; Glover believes Lionel was seeking to attain Martha 's " goodness " and the attraction is not based on lust . When Lionel is in Martha 's company he tries to present himself as a man she could be with ; he consciously attempts to change years of selfish behavior . Writer Holly Harold said his relationship with Martha parallels Lex 's relationship with Lana ; both men believe these two women will be their saving grace and pull them back from the dark side . Annette O 'Toole said Martha 's interest in Lionel is like watching a dangerous animal ; " It 's that attraction you have for a very beautiful , dangerous animal . You know you can 't stop watching it , but at the same time you feel , ' Oh my God , he 's going to kill me . ' " O 'Toole also said she believes Martha 's motivation is to get close enough to Lionel to know what he is planning to do to Clark . When Martha left the show , writer Todd Slavkin said they wanted to give the character " more of a send @-@ off " than they achieved on screen . Slavkin said they could do nothing equivalent to what they gave John Schneider because there were so many storylines by the season six finale they could fit nothing else in . The writers realized they could not kill off the character so they sent her to the U.S. Senate , creating a parallel to Clark where Martha fights injustice on the political stage . O 'Toole and Al Gough said Martha has a small attraction to Lionel and that nothing serious would come from it .

Glover believes Martha influenced Lionel to start believing that sacrifice is necessary to make the world a better place . When she leaves at the end of season six , Lionel no longer has that influence . He is constantly battling the dark and light sides of his personality . According to series writer Caroline Dries , the audience never really know his motivations because of this balancing act . Dries said this is embodied when he threatens Lana into marrying Lex , later revealing it was to protect Clark . Glover describes his off @-@ screen relationship with Annette O 'Toole the reason Martha and Lionel have such good chemistry . Glover said that when Martha and Lionel are talking to each other it feels as though he and O 'Toole are sharing a conversation , and that trust is visualized on the camera .

= = Reception = =

For his portrayal of Lionel Luthor on Smallville , John Glover has been nominated for two Saturn Awards in the category of Best Supporting Actor in a Television Series . The first came in 2003 , following his upgrade to series regular status , and the second in 2004 . By season four , one reviewer said Lionel should have left the show after succumbing to his terminal liver disease in season three . Maurice Cobbs of DVD Verdict said Lionel was taking away from the primary characters ' screen time in season four , and the producers should have killed him at the end of season three .

= = Smallville tie @-@ ins = =

= = = Novels = = =

Lionel makes his first appearance outside the television series in the Aspect book Smallville : Strange Visitors . In this title , Lionel is concerned that confidence trickster Donald Jacobi will draw too much attention to the meteor rocks in Smallville and ruin his plans to use the rocks for experiments . Lionel has the life of Jacobi 's partner put in jeopardy when he threatens to alert some mobsters who are looking for Lionel . He makes a brief appearance in Smallville : Dragon , in which he tells Lex he used Lex 's ex @-@ girlfriend Renata to get close to Lex to test him for unknown reasons . The Smallville version of Lionel makes a brief appearance in the second volume of the internet series Smallville : Chloe Chronicles ; he threatens Chloe after she discovers he is involved

with the deaths of several people .

= = = Comics = = =

In the television series ' comic book continuation written by the show 's writer Bryan Q. Miller , it is revealed that Lionel had tried to recruit Bruce Wayne 's father Thomas Wayne into the secret society Veritas with Virgil Swann , months prior to Wayne and his wife 's mugging and murder by Joe Chill .

= = Other versions = =

= = = Comics = = =

Before Smallville , Lex 's father either made brief appearances in the Superman comics or was mentioned . Lex 's father first appears in Superman 's Girl Friend , Lois Lane # 23 ( 1961 ) , in the story " The Curse of Lena Thorul ! " , written by Superman co @-@ creator Jerry Siegel . In this story he is named Jules and has disowned his criminal son Lex and changed the family name to " Thorul " . Jules Thorul and his wife Arlene are later killed in a car accident . In the 2004 miniseries Superman : Birthright , Lex 's father is not a billionaire but immediately puts Lex to work making millions for him after he discovers his son 's astronomical IQ . Lex 's father dies in a fire caused accidentally by Lex in an experiment that causes Lex 's permanent hair loss .

A different version of Lex Luthor 's history is presented in Adventure Comics # 6 ( March 2010 ) , in which Lionel is an abusive alcoholic single parent who terrorizes Lex and his sister Lena . He dies of a heart @-@ attack , leaving Lena in the care of an aunt and causes Lex to leave Smallville . It is later revealed that Lex had caused his father 's heart attack to cash in a sizable life insurance policy , which he would use as the basis for his fortune . In Blackest Night # 6 , Lionel Luthor is revived as a member of the Black Lantern Corps . Lionel Luthor appears with Lex Luthor in the Flashpoint reality where they tour General Sam Lane 's facility of aliens .

= = = Film , television and web = = =

In the 1988 ? 1992 television series Superboy , Lex 's father appears in season four 's " Know Thine Enemy " ( Part 1 ) , in which Superboy becomes Lex Luthor in a virtual reality and watches Lex grow up with an abusive father ; Lex 's father is unnamed . In Richard Donner 's Superman : The Movie and Bryan Singer 's Superman Returns , Lex briefly mentions his father ? but not his father 's name ? as the inspiration of Lex 's real estate schemes . Lex also says his father was a harsh man who ejected him from the family home .