

24 April 2007

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Warner Bros. Pictures

## **Superman's Mineral Discovered!**

### *In a Serbian mine*

The power of Superman is at our reach. Kryptonite, the green mineral that sapped the hero's power when exposed to it, has turned from fiction to reality, as a similar one has just been discovered by a team from the mining group Rio Tinto in a Serbian mine. "The real mineral is white and harmless. (...) it's not green and it doesn't glow either - although it will react to ultraviolet light by fluorescing a pinkish-orange," said Dr Chris Stanley, a mineralogist at London's Natural History Museum, to BBC. When Stanley decoded the mineral's chemical composition, he was surprised to see it was new for science, but ... already extant in the SF literature!... "Towards the end of my research I searched the web using the mineral's chemical formula - sodium lithium boron silicate hydroxide - and was amazed to discover that same scientific name, written on a case of rock containing kryptonite stolen by Lex Luther from a museum in the film Superman Returns. The new mineral does not contain fluorine (which it does in the film) and is white rather than green but, in all other respects, the chemistry matches that for the rock containing kryptonite." The mineral is very hard but also very small grained, each grain being less than 5 microns (1 micron=1/1,000,000 m) in diameter. The atomic composition was made at Canada's National Research Council by Dr Pamela Whitfield and Dr Yvon Le Page. "Being able to analyze all the properties of a mineral, both chemical and physical, brings us closer to confirming that it is indeed unique." explained Le Page. The new chemical cannot be baptized kryptonite, as there is already a real element called krypton (a noble gas), but instead it will be named jadarite, after the place where the provenience mine is located, Jadar. "If deposits occurred in sufficient quantity it could have some commercial value. It contains boron and lithium - two valuable elements with many applications. Borosilicate glasses are used to encapsulate processed radioactive waste, and lithium is used in batteries and in the pharmaceutical industries." explained Stanley.