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## Does the World Need Superheroes?

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Superbarrio Gomez of Mexico

There's been a lot of hype lately coming from my hometown of Seattle. Apparently there's a group of people there who refer to themselves as "[Real-Life Superheroes](#) [4]" from the "Rain City Superhero Movement", and they're claiming to be part of a nationwide network of crime-fighters. They're regular people (who perhaps have read a few too many comic books), that take to the streets in costumes with code names and try to fight crime. The Seattle Police Department has understandably stated some concern regarding the "superheroes". According to the [Seattle PI article](#) [5], there have been some events that have led to one "superhero" almost getting shot, and others being mistaken for criminals by citizens:

In one instance, police say a caped crusader dressed in black was nearly shot when he came running out of a dark park. In another case, a witness on Capitol Hill saw the crusaders wearing ski masks in a car parked at a Shell station and thought they were going to rob the place.

The self-proclaimed leader of the Rain City Superhero Movement is a 22-year-old man, that goes by the name [Phoenix Jones](#) [6]. He dresses in black with blue tights (what superhero costume is complete without tights?), and patrols the Seattle streets with his friends... in a Kia owned by the godmother of one of the "superheroes"... I guess "Real-Life Superheroes" use economical transportation. No high-tech Batmobiles for them.

Reading the article on SeattlePI.com piqued my curiosity. Are there really other "Real-Life Superheroes" in other parts of America, and perhaps the world? I was amazed to find that indeed there are, and some of them have websites to share their philosophies, list their services, and ask for donations to fund their superhero ways. There's [Captain B.L.A.C.K.](#) [7] of Savannah, Georgia, [Knight Owl](#) [8] from Ohio, and [Zetaman](#) [9] from Portland, Oregon. But I also found that this superhero movement isn't all that new of a concept. London also had a "superhero" for some time in [Angle-Grinder Man](#) [10], who said in 2002 "I may not be able to single-handedly and totally cast off the repressive shackles of a corrupt government - but I can cut off your wheel-clamps for you." Maybe not all the "superheroes" keep completely within the realms of the law, but it seems that the majority are trying to make a difference in their communities by helping the less fortunate, and doing charitable work.



[11]

Image by [bark](#) [11] via Flickr

For people interested in becoming "superheroes", there are plenty of websites and books to help them. [ReallifeSuperheroes.org](#) [12] recently listed a workshop in Brooklyn, New York, [to assist people with creating their superhero costumes](#) [13]. It cost \$20, but included "free beer for those 21 and older." Or you could buy the book, [How to be a Superhero](#) [14].

What do you think about the superhero movement? Are they necessary in today's society, or are they just another case of a [Neighborhood Watch Program](#) [15] getting out of hand, and turning into vigilante justice? Would you ever consider taking on a new persona and running around in the night in tights? Or should we just stay at home, and let the police do their jobs?

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