

The Real Life Super Hero Project by Peter Tangen

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These costumed heroes may look like they have jumped out of a comic book or Hollywood blockbuster, but they are all ordinary people who don't have one special ability between them – just a super human need to help fix our broken society. Captured by American photographer Peter Tangen, these normal, but anonymous, people make up his ambitious [Real Life Super Hero Project](#). The photos give a revealing insight into a small but growing niche in unusual altruistic behaviour

“I work as a freelance photographer in the film marketing sector and as such I have done photo shoots for films such as Spider-Man and the first of the Batman series starring Christian Bale,” said LA-based photographer Peter, aged 50. “I became interested in the growing phenomenon of normal everyday people adopting superhero personas. However, as I researched more I was struck by the irreverent and almost insulting tone of some of the reporting into these altruistic people, who devote their time and effort into helping others. It isn't about their costumes or their own personal mythology or mission, it is about the fact that they help people less well off than themselves

Standing just 5ft 6in tall the Crimson Fist is Atlanta's night guardian. On the night of his inaugural patrol, he happened upon two men attacking another in a dark alley. Without giving a second thought to the situation, he went to intervene. The two men stopped, and apparently

freaked out at the sudden appearance of this white-and-red clad, mask-wearing man. Amusingly, the man The Crimson Fist rescued ran away too

“I wanted to produce a full blown movie poster series about the super heroes across North America to highlight the real reasons that these people do what they do,” explained Peter

Contacting Thanatos, a long-standing and respected member of the super hero community, Peter travelled to Vancouver to conduct his first photo shoot. “Getting Thanatos onboard in the late summer of 2009 was an important first step, because the community is known for being guarded after some of the negative publicity they have received,” said Peter. “After I met such a stalwart, other heroes came on board and relatively quickly we had planned and organised a massive shoot in LA at the end of September for 19 other superheroes”

Thanatos, also known as the The Dark Avenger, patrols the streets of [Vancouver, Canada](#) providing help to the needy and homeless

A poster featuring Thanatos, who takes his name from the ancient Greek for the personification of death itself

In a real-life superhero world filled with men, Nyx works her mission in and around [New York City](#) to help the homeless and those in need of rescue from drugs

Poster featuring Nyx, who began her involvement in the superhero world at the age of 16

Citizen Prime is one of the most respected members of the superhero community. Recently retired, he is still sought out by other superheroes keen to hear his thoughts on their mission and how to develop their mythology

A poster featuring Citizen Prime, who wears a suit of armour designed by a medieval jousting club in California

Dressed as a snazzy New Yorker, Life’s superhero mission is to provide help to the homeless, especially in the freezing cold New York winters. Setting out during the week dressed in mask, waistcoat and jacket, Life has a backpack brimming with toothbrushes, soaps, food and candy bars

As the co-founder of New York’s Superheroes Anonymous, Life wants to help those who need it

KnightVigil: Patrolling the Tampa Bay area of Florida, KnightVigil is the medieval-themed guardian of America’s sunshine state

With two batons to protect himself, KnightVigil looks to help the homeless and to catch perpetrators on the run

Helping out in the city of [Portland, Oregon](#), Zetaman is an internet-savvy superhero. He launched ‘The Real Adventures of Zetaman’ online; this was the first broadcast length reality series of superheroes available on the web

Poster featuring Zetaman, so called because he “wanted a name that would look cool in bold italics”. “I try to help the hungry homeless in Portland, Oregon, ” said Zetaman, who is happy to give his real name of Illya King and his real age, 31. “I haven’t ever deterred any crimes on the street, but I am trained in the martial art of Akido”

Covered in a uniform that displays the stars of the original 13 states of America, DC Guardian's mission is to roam the streets of [Washington DC](#) with copies of the nation's constitution, Bill of Rights and Declaration of Independence. Explaining to passers-by the importance of their nation's democracy, DC's Guardian never reveals his face. He says the reason behind this is to allow black, white, Asian or Hispanic people to see themselves behind the mask

Fighting against what he feels is the 'Bystander Effect' in society, Super Hero operates in Clearwater, Florida

An ex-professional wrestler, Super Hero is the co-founder of Team Justice Inc, the first non-profit organisation for [Real Life Superheroes](#) in the United States

Geist patrols the streets of Minneapolis, correcting gangland graffiti

Describing himself as wearing 'green Space-Cowboy chic', superhero Geist patrols the streets of Rochester, Minnesota deterring petty crime, graffiti artists and helping the hungry and homeless. He carries a slingshot and electrified baton, which are legal in Minnesota, but Geist has never had to use them in self defence