

Super-Hero Free-Response Question  
(Suggested Time—40 minutes.)

Since the first appearance of Superman on April 18, 1938, superheroes have become a staple of American pop culture, spawning multi-generations of costumed characters fighting for truth, justice, and the American way. The question is raised, however, are we celebrating heroic acts or simple vigilantism.

After reading your comic book, read the following sources carefully, including the introductory information for each source. In a well-organized essay that synthesizes data from your comic book and at least three of the additional sources, defend or refute the idea that super heroes are, in reality, vigilantes.

Rubric:

Use pre-writing (and show your work).	20 points
Proofread and edit your essay for errors and flow (show edited proofs).	20 points
Make sure you have a clear and defensible claim (thesis).	40 points
Have a counterclaim (counter thesis).	10 points
Use at least three of the supplied sources Make sure you use both data (30 points) and warrant (30 points): Don't just name drop the citation, state what it means and how it pertains to, and supports or refutes, the claim.	60 points
Tie in information from your comic book with both data (20 points) and warrant (20 points).	40 points
Do not overload your paper with one source.	10 points
Total Points:	200

Make sure your argument is central; use the sources to illustrate and support your reasoning. Avoid merely summarizing the sources. Indicate clearly which sources you are drawing from, whether through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. You may cite the proved sources by using the name of the author(s) in parentheses.

Use your comic book as your main source and cite it correctly by making a works cited entry and then correctly using in text citations.

Supplement your argument with at least three of the six provided sources:

Source A: (Karlinsky and Hopper)

Source D: (Adams)

Source B: (Aragonés)

Source E: (Winton)

Source C: (Pantazi)

Source F: (Harris)

Source A  
Karlinsky, Neal and Jessica Hopper. "Vigilante  
Justice: Real Life Superheroes Fight Crime."  
ABC News 7 Jan. 2010. Web. 21 Aug.  
2014.

Armed with a skintight black-and-gold, belted costume, a cape and a fedora, Phoenix Jones suits up at night to fight crime on the streets of Seattle. He's the leader of a real-life superhero movement.

"I'm definitely not going to let my fellow citizens be assaulted and not do anything," Jones said.

Jones leads the Rain City Superheroes, a group of 10 fighters who perform their own form of vigilante justice on the streets of Seattle.

"It's a pretty simple message. Citizens need to be more accountable. Calling 911 is a great start, but it's not the end all to end all," Jones said. "Criminals feel free to just run wild in my city, and I'm not going to stand for it."

Superman can fly, Batman has his gadgets and Spiderman has his webs and supersharp senses. But Phoenix Jones, Red Dragon and Buster Doe have just their snazzy costumes and endless enthusiasm as they patrol Seattle's Capitol Hill.

Red Dragon sports a red robe and a wooden sword. Buster Doe covers his face with a white scarf.

Jones said he developed his costume, along with his alter ego's name, when his crime-fighting ways made him too recognizable.

"When I started breaking apart fights, I had no outfit or moniker or symbol, and people started recognizing me in my everyday life. It got kind of dangerous and very uncomfortable," he said. "This suit is what people recognize, and when I take the suit off, I'm able to live as close to a normal life as possible until I put it back on and am ready to defend the people of Seattle."

While Jones might not have Batman's Alfred Pennyworth to help him build cool new

gadgets, he has adapted his car and costume to protect him.

He wears a bulletproof vest and carries not just a Taser but a net gun and a grappling hook.

His car has a computer in it that prints any e-mails sent to his superhero e-mail address.

### **Real Life Superheroes Tackle Streets of Seattle**

On the night ABC News went on patrol with Jones, the caped crusader zapped a warning shot with his Taser during a very tense run in with a man he said was about to drive drunk.

"Just back up! Stay back, stay away. I don't want to have to Tase you," Jones yelled.

Red Dragon and Buster Joe called the police.

"I know what you guys are doing ... fine ... but if somebody's drunk, all of a sudden having somebody in their face with masks on ..." a Seattle police officer warned Jones.

Police are perplexed, worried the group will turn into vigilantes and doubt that the superhero posse has ever stopped any crime.

"Our concern is if it goes badly, then we end up getting called anyway, and we may have additional victims," Detective Mark Jamieson said.

Jones said that he calls police ahead of time to tell them where he'll be patrolling. He said that his costume is crucial in helping police recognize him, and it makes an impact on would-be criminals.

"If you fight crime without the outfit, the police don't know who to look for. They don't know who's bad and who's good. ...This

is a very noticeable outfit. ... It tells people and drug dealers and criminals ... that when you see this outfit and this group of people, we stand for a message. ... We're against the crimes that you're trying to do," Jones said.

Seattle police said that it is not illegal to dress up as a superhero, but they worry about excess calls to 911 when residents confuse Jones and the other real-life superheroes with criminals. Police said that acting as a superhero can be dangerous, but Red Dragon said that the people they confront rarely turn against them.

"If you approach somebody with the right attitude, they're not going to really escalate things. For the most part, they'll just leave you alone," he said.

### **Real-Life Superheroes Feed Homeless**

Jones' quest to help his fellow residents is a weirdly close imitation of the movie "Kick Ass," whose characters dress up as superheroes and take on crime fighting.

Jones said he has a real nine-to-five job, a wife and two kids.

He told ABC affiliate KOMO that an incident with his son inspired him to put on his cape.

One night someone broke into Jones'

car, and the broken glass injured his son and resulted in a trip to the emergency room. When people told Jones that several people witnessed the break-in but did nothing, he was dumbfounded.

"Teenagers are running down the street, breaking into cars, and no one does anything? Where's the personal accountability?" Jones told KOMO.

Jones emphasizes that his real mission is to help people -- he also hands out food to the homeless. On the night ABC News followed the men, they distributed food from Taco Bell to homeless people sitting on the sidewalks.

While police might be skeptical, Jones and his gang of wannabe heroes don't plan to give up.

"I have two kids," he said. "I always tell them the same thing every time before I go on patrol: 'This is the only thing daddy could think of to make the world better for you guys, and I'll see you when I get home.'"

Source B  
Aragonés, Sergio. "A Mad Look at Superheroes."  
*Mad*. Sept. 1975. 21. Print.



Source C  
Pantazi, Andrew. "Bystander comes to aid of Putnam store clerk, stabbing, killing would-be robber armed with box cutter" *The Florida Times Union*. 23 May, 2014. Web. 22 Aug, 2014

**Bystander comes to aid of Putnam store clerk, stabbing, killing would-be robber armed with box cutter**

By Pantazi Fri, May 23, 2014 @ 9:38 am | updated Fri, May 23, 2014 @ 4:01 pm

A witness came to the aid of a store clerk during a robbery attempt at a Fruitland Kangaroo station and killed the suspect early Friday.

Jeffery Charles Lohman walked into the store at 1140 County Road 309 with a box cutter and demanded money from the cashier, according to Putnam County Sheriff's Office Sgt. Hancel Woods. While he was trying to rob from the clerk, a bystander fought and stabbed the suspect with a pocket knife. By the time Sheriff's Office deputies arrived, Lohman had died.

The 42-year-old had a string of arrests

in Putnam County back to 1993. He had previously been charged with fraud, battery, not paying child support, grand theft auto and forgery, among other charges.

Authorities are still investigating the case and did not release the other man's name.



Lohman

Source D

Adams, Becket. "Fearless Bystander Stops 'Armed' Bank Robber in His Tracks, Hits Him So Hard He Broke His Hand." The Blaze 18 Oct. 2013. Web 22 Aug, 2014.

**Fearless Bystander Stops 'Armed' Bank Robber in His Tracks, Hits Him So Hard He Broke His Hand**

A would-be bank robber in Fullerton, Calif., met his match Tuesday when an infuriated bystander decided to call his bluff and take him down.

Herb Pearce, who works as a termite exterminator, told CBS Los Angeles that he was at a Chase Bank branch when the "armed" suspect stormed in, marched up to the counter, and announced the stick up.

"(He said), 'This is a robbery! This is a stick-up! I want all your money right now!'" said Pearce. "I'm looking at this guy, thinking, 'Is this guy for real?'"

The suspect, 29-year-old Jacob Williams, turned to Pearce and pointed the "gun," which was concealed in a bag over the suspect's hand, directly at the exterminator.

"He had his hand in the plastic bag," he said.

However, rather than cowering and complying with Williams' demands, Pearce decided to fight back. He grabbed Williams' arm and "clocked" him.

"Pow! I clocked him. He went back a little bit, he came at me again, I hit him again," he said.

Thankfully, Pearce's decision to call Williams' bluff didn't end in tragedy. As it turns out, the suspect was indeed unarmed, according to police.

Williams was arrested the moment police arrived on the scene.

Obviously, law enforcement officials don't recommend bystanders "clock" supposed bank thieves – but the police who responded to the situation can't help but be proud of Pearce.

"I have a feeling he would have completed a robbery, so in that effect, Mr. Pearce is a hero in that he stopped a crime," said Sgt. Jeff Stuart of the Fullerton Police Department.

Pearce broke and fractured his hand in the process of taking down Williams and, unfortunately, he can't afford insurance. He has no idea how he'll cover the medical costs.

CBS2's Stacey Butler reports that Pearce asked the bank to help pay his the medical bills. However, her report adds, he said the bank "refused because their insurance provider wouldn't cover it."

A bank spokesperson said Chase is "looking into it," the CBS report notes.

Nevertheless, and despite the cost, Pearce said he'd do it again.

"I'll be darned if some junkie is gonna' come off the street and take my (money). I put too many hours to get that...paycheck. So I'm not gonna' let him take my money," said Pearce.

Source E

Winton, Richard. "L.a. Sees Big Jump in Bike Thefts, Prompting Some Vigilante Justice" Los Angeles Times. 11 Feb. 2010. Web 22 Aug, 2014.

### **L.A. sees big jump in bike thefts, prompting some vigilante justice**

Although crime across L.A. is dropping, there is one glaring exception: bicycle thefts, which rose 29% last year. Nearly 2,000 bikes were reported stolen last year -- and authorities believe the actual number of thefts was much higher because so many people don't report stolen bikes.

LAPD detectives believe the increase is due in part to more people using bikes to get around in some neighborhoods. A Times analysis found the USC campus, downtown L.A. and Venice to be hot spots for bike thefts.

Detectives recently broke up a bicycle theft ring and nabbed two men who swiped bikes downtown and sold them on Craigslist. At the motel of one of the alleged thieves, they said they found bolt cutters, hacksaws and a Mercedes-Benz equipped with a bike rack.

Some bike messengers last month took justice into their own hands when they caught two suspected thieves, teenage boys who attended a local Catholic high school. According to police, the messengers stripped down the teens to their boxer shorts before taking their cellphones, backpacks and clothes.

"They meted out street justice. We don't condone street justice. They never threatened them. But they made it clear: don't mess with another person's property," Los Angeles Police Lt. Paul Vernon said. "This incident and the arrests are the tip of the iceberg when comes to people stealing bicycles."

Vernon said the two boys told police they were robbed by about 20 men on bicycles at 6th Street and Grand Avenue about 3 p.m. on Jan. 12. Investigators said they cannot prove the boys were stealing bikes and continue to look for the assailants.

Still, the incident has been the talk of the downtown biking world. "There wasn't any



Hundreds of recovered bicycles in an LAPD warehouse downtown. Credit: Anne Cusack / Los Angeles Times

violence. ... They were stripped of their clothes and sent home," said bike messenger Douglas Forrest, who says the action was the talk of various bike shops and collectives.

In the downtown area, the number of bikes reported stolen increased last year by 57% -- and cyclists have noticed. "They'll take anything they can get these days. It has gotten really bad." Forrest said.

Downtown, bicycles are most likely to be stolen between noon and 6 p.m. and Wednesdays are the hottest days for theft, according to an LAPD analysis. The Richard Riordan Library, named incidentally for the cycling former mayor, is a favorite spot for thieves. Poorly designed racks out of sight from passersby make it easier for thieves, said L.A. cycle activist Steve Box.

Ironically, Box said, some of the worst positioned racks can be found at the new LAPD headquarters. Some of the upside-down U-shaped racks the city uses have even been cut and the gap covered with stickers, he said. Bike thieves simply slip out the locked bicycles.

Source F

Harris, Shay. "Victim's Family Mourns as Murder Suspect Walks Free" WMCTV. 09 Jan, 2014. Web. 22 Aug, 2014.

**Victim's Family Mourns as Murder Suspect Walks Free**

FORREST CITY, AR - (WMC-TV) - A murder suspect was released on a technicality. The murder victim's family is outraged that he is walking free.

"Our son was murdered a year ago, 2013, on a Thursday night, January 17, at 6:30 p.m.," said father Theodis Cochran.

It is a night Theodis and his family will not forget. His 21-year-old son Joey Rucker and 11-year-old daughter were at his oldest daughter's home when shots rang out.

"Guys were shooting, and the bullet came through the window, and shot him killed him instantly in the chest," said Theodis.

"My daughter said if he wouldn't have grabbed her, the bullet probably would've shot her. He grabbed her. The bullet hit him in the chest," said mother Bonita.

The family suffered another huge blow when 23-year-old Jeremy Buchanan was released on his own recognizance.

Buchanan had been under a \$500,000 bond for Rucker's murder when he was

released.

According to an order from the circuit court of St. Francis County, Buchanan was released on November 6, 2013 due to a technicality based his right to a speedy trial within a nine month period.

"It's like the system working in the criminal's favor instead of in our favor," said Theodis.

Now Buchanan is on the run and police have no idea where he is located.

"He did not show up in court, and now they can't find him after the judge issued his bond to be revoked," said Theodis.

Bonita says instead of celebrating the news of her son's scholarship to college that came the day of the murder, she was mourning his death.

"I'll never see him go and get married, I'll never see him with children, and it just hurts," said Bonita.

Action News 5 reached out to Forrest City Police for comment. They referred us to the prosecutor's office, which has not called us back for comment.