

A young man races toward Phoenix and he responds by pepper-spraying him in the face.

"I got fucking pepper spray in my eye!" Maria yells at one point.

A terrified-looking bystander, a nerdy man in a sweater, calls the police and stammers into the phone: "A huge group of people are fighting and there's pepper spray and superheroes and I don't know."

"Protect yourselves!" Phoenix yells.

"Oh my God, oh my God," says the nerdy bystander, and as I watch this from the safety of my home I think, *There but for the grace of God go I.*

The video ends.

Phoenix is booked into jail on four counts of assault. He's released on bail the following afternoon. Two days later—a few hours before he is due to be arraigned in court—my Skype flickers into life.

"Phoenix!" I say, startled. "You're unmasked!"

"The police took my Super Suit," he says. He sounds sorrowful. "I was debating whether to show you my face or just these . . ." He waves his biceps in front of the Skype camera. "Hey!" he says, pretending to be the voice of his biceps. "Remember me?"

"I do remember you," I say.

Phoenix doesn't look like I'd imagined he would. All I'd had to go on was the muscular physique, so I assumed his face would be tougher, more stern or something. But, while handsome, he's also unexpectedly goofy-looking. He's wearing nerdy, quite effeminate spectacles, and has a strange haircut that looks like an upside-down bucket.

"That's an incredible haircut," I say.

"Yeah, it's like Kid 'n Play, the Black Elvis," he explains. "So. Anyway. The police stole my Super Suit. They said it was evidence of a crime. But if someone commits a so-called assault, you don't take their shirt and pants."

"It does seem punitive," I say. "What did you say to them when they took your suit?"

"I said, 'Really?' They said, 'Yeah, that way we can keep your big mouth shut.' It's been a rough road."