

2:30 a.m. Phoenix says he wouldn't normally invite a journalist to his Secret Identity apartment but they're moving on Monday as their safety was compromised: "You walk in and out in a mask enough times, people get to know where you live."

It is a very, very messy apartment. Comic books and toys and exercise videos are strewn everywhere. He disappears into the bedroom and emerges in his full bulletproof superhero attire.

"Let's bust some crime!" he hollers.

Downtown is deserted. We see neither his crew nor any crime.

"How are you feeling?" I ask him.

"I'm in a lot of pain," he says. "The cut's still bleeding. Internally and externally. A couple of my old injuries are flaring up. Like some broken ribs. I'm having a rough night."

I glance at him, concerned. "Maybe you're going too hard," I say. "Aren't you in danger of burning out?"

"Crime doesn't care how I feel," he says.

Just then a young man approaches us. He's sweating, looking distressed. "I've been in tears!" he yells.

He tells us his story. He's here on vacation, his parents live a two-hour bus ride away in central Washington, and he's only \$9.40 short for the fare home. Can Phoenix please give him \$9.40?

"I've been crying, dude," he says. "I've asked sixty or seventy people. Will you touch my heart, save my life, and give me nine dollars and forty cents?"

Phoenix turns to me. "You down for a car-ride adventure?" he says excitedly. "We're going to *drive the guy back to his parents!*"

The young man looks panicked. "Honestly, nine dollars and forty cents is fine," he says, backing away slightly.

"No, no!" says Phoenix. "We're going to *drive you home!* Where's your luggage?"

"Um, in storage at the train station . . ." he says.

"We'll meet you at the train station in ten minutes!" says Phoenix.

Thirty minutes later. The train station. The man hasn't showed up. Phoenix narrows his eyes. "I think he was trying to scam us," he says. "Hmm!"

"Can you be naive?" I ask him.