



It looks like we've reached the end of the hall. How do you want to go in?



If our target is here, he's just past that door. We'll blast our way through.



Are you sure about this?

No, about Malone.



The door isn't that heavy, it'll blow right off.



I'm more than sure, but I'm also a little nervous. We have a study date tonight, and I'm going to tell him everything. My complete origins story!



Calling your life history an origins story is weird... Let's focus on our mission. I want to get out of this dank basement as fast as possible.

I normally start with the toes. Sometimes the fingers, but more often than not, it's the toes.



I have money... Lots of it. If you let me go, I'll give you whatever you want.



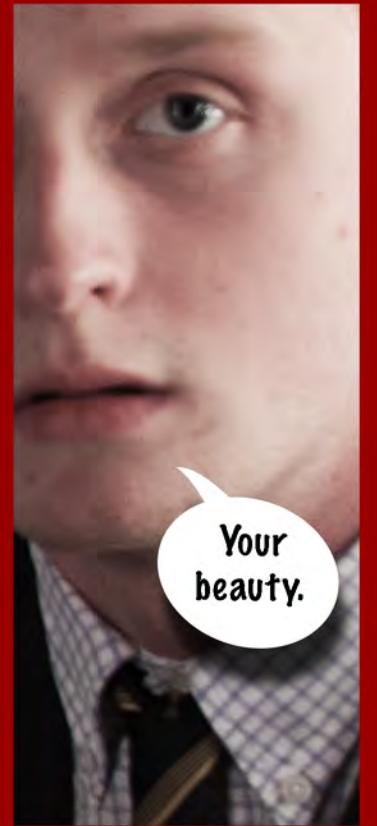
I want no money. Not a single dollar. All I want is you.



Me? What for?



Your beauty.



We don't live in a world that allows for the perfection of a body like yours. It must be redesigned.



You don't have to do this.

Of course I do. And you should be happy. You're such a rare case, that I'm going to do something I've never done before. I'm going to begin with your face. Now hold still. This is going to sting.

ARTICLE ONE

A History of Superhero Fashion

- By Chip Perro

One of the most heated areas of debate regarding superheroes centers on their wardrobes.

From comics to film, every aspect of a superhero costume is scrutinized, and even the slightest creative change can spark huge fan support or (as is more often the case) fan backlash. But what is the origin of the superhero costume? Why the tights, flashy chest symbols, capes, boots, and infamous outer-trunks?

The concept of the superhero can be traced all the way back to Greek Mythology, but the modern superhero-era began with Superman. His bright red and blue costume set the style for every superhero who followed in his footsteps, and even today, many superhero creators incorporate those same costume elements and style in their modern designs.

After Superman debuted, five notable elements of a superhero costume became standard-design. Bright colored tights, chest symbols, boots, capes, and outer-trunks.

The form fitting costume allows artists to show off superhero muscle. Comic book characters are generally strong, or at the very least, physically fit, and drawing them in form fitting clothing is an easy way to show this to the reader. Primary colors were regularly chosen in the 1930's and 1940's, because printers could only print in limited colors.

Often, in-story explanations reveal that superheroes rarely wear tights, but are instead wearing specialized crime-fighting suits that aid them in battle. In the Perro Worldwide Universe, it is regularly stated that the Mission Park characters wear a Bulletproof Polyurethane Polymer.

The notion that comic book characters wear tights became popular when stories were adapted for film and television. The best way to remain faithful to the source material is to duplicate the look of a costume as accurately as possible, and to show live-action actors with bulging muscles like their hand-drawn counterparts, tights became the material of choice. Even today, the textured, rubber-looking costumes that are seen on screen are completely formfitting, and are made with a tights-like base material.

A second notable feature of the superhero costume is the chest symbol. When comic book characters are drawn, they often look similar from the neck up. Superhero costumes gives the characters identity, and it makes it much easier to differentiate them from other characters. The chest symbol is a great way to brand a character, and allows the character to remain the same despite changes in either artist or performer. It's an important costume element that continues to be used to this day, and one that has helped these characters endure change from one decade to the next.

Boots and capes are flourishes that add style, but unlike the formfitting costume and chest symbol, they are not essential. Despite being strongly associated with superheroes, many creators have abandoned both capes and boots if they decide that it doesn't fit the look of their character.

Capes harken back to an earlier age of heroes. Cape length is also scrutinized, and with each decade, they keep getting longer. Boot design can be different for every hero, and today, many characters are now seen in footwear that look more like sneakers.

Superhero outer-trunks are, without a doubt, the most parodied aspect of the costume. They are no longer the edgy fashion statement they once were, and more and more, they are being eliminated from superhero costumes. At Perro Worldwide, no superhero wears outer-trunks!

Contrary to popular belief, outer-trunks are not the result of backwards dressing. In the 1930's, they were a key costume element for real-life circus strongmen. The outer-trunks naturally break up the waist and legs with bright colors, and they help to show off a performers form and technique better than a one-color jumpsuit. This is the inspiration for the comic book look, but today, it's simply out of style.

Ultimately, the superhero costume is a tool used to define the character. It allows the character to live beyond the story, and to inspire good in the real world. It makes it possible for the hero to be portrayed by multiple talented performers, without the audience questioning who they are watching. There is a form of theater known as commedia dell'arte, which is Italian for comedy of craft. Performers would wear masks, which represented specific characters and personalities. It allowed them to travel from one place to the next, without audiences questioning who they were watching. In many ways, the superhero costume serves the same purpose.

I think this is the reason the superhero costume is so heavily scrutinized. Any change, no matter how small it might be, could potentially change the hero. As we move forward, we'll see new costumes and new interpretations on old favorites. Fans will debate design, color, and texture. To many, it will appear frivolous, unimportant to the larger story. But if one knows anything about superhero fashion, something as small as an extra button could change everything.

Never go to war with yourself.

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