**Safety-oriented On-road Practices of Adult Bicycle Riders in Brooklyn, New York USA**

**Interview Questions**

**#19, Atlantic Avenue, recruited October 6, 2018, interviewed October 9, 2018.**

**TO124E02.mp3**

*Background Questions:*

1. What is your age? (Were you born prior to this month and day in the year 2000?)

**47**

1. What is your race or ethnicity?

**White**

1. What is your gender?

**Male**

1. What is the highest level of education that you completed?

**Post-graduate diploma**

1. How long (in months or years) have you been riding bicycles?

**I suppose since I was, like, 5 – so 42 years.**

1. How long (in months or years) have you been riding bicycles in Brooklyn?

**I moved here 15 years ago, so – 15 years.**

1. Compared to most other bicycle riders you have observed, are you more careful, less careful, or about the same?

**I’d say I’d be about the same to more careful.**

1. Have you been in any bicycle crashes that involved other vehicles or pedestrians?

**I have been hit by a car once, and – most of my crashes in fact have involved only me – ice and issues like that. And pedestrians – I go ov-- used to go over the Brooklyn Bridge on a daily basis in the afternoon – I still go in the morning, but I used to go in the afternoon when it gets very crowded and inevitably one would clip people occasionally – I wouldn’t call them crashes, but that would – that would happen occasionally.**

[f/u Q: Do you mind telling me what happened when you got hit by the car?]

**This is going down Court Street in Brooklyn -- car was coming from behind and the mirror clipped me, and was enough of a clip to send me over my handlebars.**

[I hope you weren’t hurt.]

**No, no, just winded, but no serious injuries.**

During the past 12 months…..

1. What have been the main reasons or purposes for going bicycle riding? (Commute? Errands? Transportation to other locations? Exercise? Recreation? Part of your job? Other?)

**I cycle to work, so I do this every day.**

[Just to clarify, do you mean that you commute to work, or that you cycle as part of your work?]

**I commute to work. And, as today, I had several meetings around town, and I cycled to those.**

1. On average, how frequently have you ridden your bicycle?

**Virtually every day.**

[including the weekends?]

**Yes, most weekends on errands or occasionally for pleasure, but there’s always an errand to do.**

1. On average, how long (in minutes) did you ride each day that you went bicycling?

**So, my basic commute is 25 minutes one-way, so at a bare minimum I would be doing 50 minutes a day. It would probably average in the region of about an hour a day, every day.**

1. How much of your bicycle riding took place when there was a lot of motor vehicle traffic?

**Well, I tend – I leave for work early, so -- and I go over the Brooklyn Bridge, and so there’s no – there’s a cycle lane, and I work in Tribeca, which is quiet at 7:30 in the morning. So I would say there are portions of the journey where I encounter heavy amounts of traffic, but 90% of the way is reasonably quiet -- cycle lanes or bridges.**

1. How much of your bicycle riding took place in darkness or low light conditions such as dusk?

**Well, as of, I suppose, next month, all my returning from work will happen at night. So for about 4 -- I suppose, 4-5 months of the year, I will be cycling on weekdays at night.**

*Primary study questions:*

1. From the perspective of safety, what is it like to go bicycle riding in the streets of Brooklyn?

**Well, I can only – I did a lot of cycling in London and I can only compare it, saying it’s a lot better. There are now a lot of cycle lanes, the lanes themselves typically quite wide. The amount of traffic means that traffic is moving quite slowly, so I’m not generally that fearful of – I’m not too intimidated by the situation.**

1. For a bicycle rider in Brooklyn, what are the most common dangers or hazards that confront a bicycle rider?

**I suppose number one is parked cars, so the people opening doors – especially from taxis, because I assume people’s -- it’s not people’s cars --- they don’t really care if the door gets hit. People turning – making a turn and not really paying attention to your presence, so either you -- if you don’t stop you basically run into the side of the car. And cars, I suppose, that are parked in the cycle lanes, for example, and you’re having to then move out into traffic – that’s a problem. And also, again on cycle lanes, cyclists, especially food delivery riders, coming the wrong way and you’re having to move out of their way, again into traffic, so out of safety into – into a danger zone, so to speak. So I -- Those are probably the most common things that I pay attention to. And maybe people parking – oh, and I suppose pedestrians are probably as problematic as vehicles, but I don’ know if that’s part of this question.**

[well, yeah, I certainly would – if you feel pedestrians pose issues for bicycle riders, then yes.]

**Well, it’s -- again – I – I -- Where I work means that I go through Chinatown, and there is a tendency just to not really pay attention to cyclists, so people will be cautious about cars, they’ll let cars by, but for some bizarre reason will just step out in front of a cyclist, so one always has to be quite ready to put on the brakes, and its – yeah – if you’re not – if you’re stubborn, you’ll hit people -- a person, so you have to – you have to basically end up giving way, even if you have the light.**

You sort of anticipated my follow-up question. Are there particular things you do while riding to avoid these problems that you were talking about?

**Well, I think the – one has to always be aware, and I think after 42 years you kind of -- like driving, you become – subconsciously you have to be aware of anything happening, you know, coming from the side or the front. I’m not too aware of what’s behind me, because I don’t have any mirrors or anything but -- It’s always being -- anticipating what someone’s going to do -- if they are likely to just, like, step in front of you if they’re a pedestrian, or if they’re a car that appears to want to turn and simply doesn’t acknowledge your presence – so yeah, it’s awareness.**

1. Are there dangers or hazards that are difficult or impossible for a bicycle rider to see and react to?

**I think the one that worries me the most is the doors – if they do open – I’ve been fortunate, I’ve not hit a door. My wife was hit only last week – a taxi door opened.**

[I hope she wasn’t hurt.]

**Bruised, that’s all, but -- That’s – there’s a point where there’s no time to react, and you can’t keep – often you can’t keep three feet away from cars, you don’t have that kind of a space, so in a way you have to just hope that it happens a second or two before you get – you reach that point. Otherwise, as I say, there’s nothing you can do, if that opens just at the last minute.**

[[I was going to ask if there are particular things you do while riding to avoid them but it sounds like -- ]

**I’ve – I’ve -- My perspective is to ride on the left side of – I mean, the right side of the street, because that’s the driver’s side when they come out of cars, and those are more likely to be coming out of cars because more likely to be only a driver than, say, a passenger. Drivers I think are more careful about their car, so they are more likely to be looking in the mirror and paying attention to you. Passengers, especially if they’re children, are simply – don’t seem to be aware of that, so the left hand of the street in my – in my experience is a more dangerous side of the street.**

1. Please describe things you have seen other bicycle riders do that you consider to be dangerous.

**I certainly don’t believe in having headphones. I’ve seen cyclists text while cycling, which I think is completely insane. I myself will go through red lights, but I’m always slowing down, I’m always looking, I never inconvenience anyone who has the light, but cyclists who just simply go through an intersection without slowing down, with even looking – I -- I – it appalls me. But I see that every day, probably, some of this stuff. I see a lot of dangerous cycling.**

1. If it were your job to teach other adult bicyclists how to stay safe while riding in the streets of Brooklyn, what particular instructions would you give them?

**I would – I wouldn’t encourage them to go through a red light. I’ve been stopped myself a couple of times for this, but I would certainly say you should always slow down and be aware of what’s coming. If it’s not your light, you shouldn’t be going through, cutting off pedestrians or cutting off cars. It’s – I think that’s probably the number one advice I would give. And -- yeah, just be always aware.**

1. Imagine for a moment that, right now, you are riding on a Brooklyn street along with other traffic. Tell me all the different things you are doing to keep yourself safe and avoid a crash or collision as you ride.

**Well, I will always have my hands on the handlebar-- on the handlebars; hands on the bra-- well -- the brakes within reach. So, I don’t – I wouldn’t ever recommend sort of riding around with just one arm, or two arms just not on the handlebar. And not having headphones, listening, being aware of what’s around, and but mostly, yeah, just watching, anticipating, seeing if that person is – say, the pedestrian – is aware that you’re approaching, if they’re about to step off the curb. And if they are, if they can’t see you, make it clear to them that, if it is your light, that you’re not going to slow down and they need to stay back. I think it’s important sometimes to be a little aggressive, but know when to stand back. And there are bad drivers, and there’s no point getting angry with them, it’s just, get out of their way if they seem to be unable to stay in their lane -- again, anticipate that kind of driving and either stay behind them or move to the side. There’s no point fighting a car.**

1. Now I would like to throw out a few words or phrases and ask you if they trigger any additional thoughts about how to ride safely:

* Intersections

**Slow down or stop**

* Traffic signs and signals

**Be aware of them, do not ignore them. I suppose, yeah, that’s --.**

* Right-of-way

**I always give people the right-of-way. I don’t -- I – yeah.**

* Pedestrians

**Be wary of pedestrians. They are as dangerous as cars. Especially on the Brooklyn Bridge.**

* Speed

**I’m not – I don’t -- I don’t cycle fast. I’m not in a hurry, so I would keep – I see no reason to go faster than 15 miles an hour. Speed will only increase, I suppose, the chances of something wrong happening.**

* Respect

**I -- I am of the opinion that I’m very vulnerable, and I should show as much respect to cars – disrespecting cars is something that I’ve had issues with other cyclists whose behavior is quite aggressive. And as I say, I wouldn’t pick a fight with a car, and I don’t want cyclists to be deemed to be disrespectful, aggressive, or irresponsible, and I think that’s how they’re perceived by a lot of people because of disrespect. So I think it’s important to know when you have – when it’s your light, or it’s their light, and respect those rules.**

* Trucks, buses

**They have – in my experience, keep some distance. They do have blind spots on them, and I will never get as close to a bus or truck as I would to a car.**

* Parked cars

**I’d say, a silent danger that is a small one, but I deem to be potentially the most dangerous one to a cyclist. Open doors.**

* “Taking the lane”

[had to define this.]

**Oh, no no – I, yeah, never do that. I’m forced to, occasionally, on my commute home because of the narrow streets in Cobble Hill, and it’s something that I’m aware of and I try to move as fast as possible to avoid inconveniencing people, because drivers can sometimes be quite annoyed when they’re stuck behind you, and I will sometimes even move to the side if there’s an empty parking space to, like -- So I – I’m – I avoid taking the lane as much as I can.**

* Pet peeves

**I suppose a lot of the -- what I mentioned before. Pedestrians that don’t acknowledge you and will step out in front of you, feeling that you’re not worthy of them having to slow down. Cyclists who go the wrong way, expect you to move out of their way. That’s probably two of my pet peeves. And -- Oh, and cars that are parked on cycle lanes, that’s something that I will always turn around and give a driver a dirty look when that’s done.**

1. Please feel free to offer any other thoughts about the topics we have discussed today.

**Well, (*unintelligible 1-2 words*) I think generally speaking, cycling in Brooklyn -- New York in general -- is generally quite a positive experience. It’s certainly, I find, one of the fastest ways to get around town, even though – even though I’m not a fast cyclist. It’s a great way, and I think there’s been a lot of improvement in terms of the cycle lanes. So yeah, I mean, I’ve used – today I must have used about 10,15 miles of cycle lanes. So I’m quite grateful for those, along the Hudson, along Kent Avenue, over the bridges – there’s been four trips over the bridges today…..**

**So I think it’s generally quite a positive thing, and if one is relaxed and aware, I think it’s probably the best way to get around.**

Thank you very much for participating in this research study and especially for taking the time and effort to complete this interview with me.