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

**Interview Questions**

**#3, Roy’s Sheepshead, recruited July 28, interviewed July 30, 2018.**

**T0116E01.mp3**

*Background Questions:*

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

**53**

1. What is your race or ethnicity?

**White – Caucasian**

1. What is your gender?

**Male**

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

**Some college**

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

**About 20 years**

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

**About the same**

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

**That depends. It’s funny -- when I’m riding on the bike paths, I’m about the same. People are very -- I’ve noticed that people are very courteous, and they look out for each other on the bike paths. When I’m riding on the streets, It’s -- I’m more careful.**

[F/U Q: Is there anything that you could point to in your own bicycling that you feel you do that others don’t?]

**Yeah -- It’s not so much what I do as what I don’t do. I notice – look, I ride – I ride under different circumstances, I guess. I guess I get into it later with some of the other questions, but I – I sometimes go to work on Sunday -- On Sundays I take the bicycle in to work only because the trains are horrible. And I notice when I go over the bridge, you know, a lot of people, they have headphones on, they’re having phone conversations, and it’s, you know, it’s dangerous. They’re not staying in the lane, it’s dangerous. And I have to be, you know, more alert because I have to think for both of us then.**

[These things that you describe, do I understand that these are things that you don’t do yourself?]

**I do not put headphones on. You know, I ride -- One of the reasons, you know, clear my head, relax, enjoy…. Yeah, I’m trying to, you know, go faster or, you know, understand the bicycle better, but, you know, its -- basically it’s, you know, for exercise and for, you know, health. As we get older, you know, we have to do something, and I enjoy the bicycle a lot.**

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

**Only myself. This was almost 40 years ago (describes issue of getting foot caught trying to open quick release pedals)**

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?)

**Again -- commuting, errands, exercise, and recreation. I have – I do own multiple bicycles – I have five bicycles, so I use different ones for different purposes – yeah, so I cover all of that.**

[Do you use it – is it mainly for commuting or mainly for exercise or for -- ?]

**Mainly for exercise and some errands. I do some shopping, you know, just so I don’t have to drive around looking for a parking spot. It’s a lot easier to chain the bicycle up in front of the stores I need to go to, and just, you know, fill up the bag and come home.**

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

**Pretty much every weekend. Both days.**

1. On average, how long (in minutes) did you ride each time you go bicycling?

**Average, 3-4 hours each time, each day.**

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

**You know, when I ride the road bike, I try to go earlier in the morning, just so I have the rest of the day for myself as well, but also because there’s less traffic. But when I go in on Sundays, I go in in late morning or early afternoon and there is a lot of traffic, you know, on the weekend. On Sundays a lot – yeah, going to work there’s a lot of traffic.**

[Do you care to try to put in in percentage terms?]

**Let’s say 25%, because it doesn’t take me as long – yeah, about 25%.**

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

**Okay, when I come home from work on Sundays, it’s dark out, so let’s say half of 25%, so 12% 12½ %.**

*Primary study questions:*

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

**It’s gotten better over the last, you know, ten years – it’s gotten better. More people I think are aware, you know, because of the bike lanes, because there’s just been more riders, so people, you know – it is -- people -- it’s gotten better, in my perspective. There’s still, you know, a long way to go, there’s still people who try to intimidate you or whatever, you know, in their cars, but it’s gotten better.**

[When you say, it’s still got a long way to go, what specific things do you think about?

**People -- Mostly, when people park, or getting in and out of cars, you know, they swing the door open. You know, I myself, I drive an automobile also, and I’m more conscious, I look through my rearview mirror before opening up the door – people still don’t do that, and, again, I have to -- if I see a car pulling in and the lights just shut off, you know, their parking lights or whatever, you know, they just took their foot off the brake, I know that the door’s going to open up, so I have to prepare myself. I look back to make sure there’s no car in my lane, you know, I’m prepared to swerve, you know. And also pedestrians, I wrote down, also pedestrians. You know, if I see someone walking perpendicular on the sidewalk, to the sidewalk, that means they’re going to come out into the street, so if there’s a van or a big truck, you know, I’m -- again, I look back to make sure I’m able to swerve, sometimes, you know, I ring my bell to let people know that, you know -- I’m anticipating them jumping out, they’re not looking – and, you know, also, by that, when I walk in the street, I stop – you know, I stop at the end of the car and look: for bicycles now, as opposed to just walking out, you know, in traffic. So yeah.**

1. For a bicycle rider in Brooklyn, what are the most common dangers or hazards that confront a bicycle rider? Are there particular things you do while riding to avoid them?

**Like -- Like I just said, anticipate, anticipate, you know, for the most part. And always – look, you know, I’ve been fortunate, I haven’t – but ….. it will happen. I go through – you know, I wonder every day, you know, is today the day I get -- you know, I hit someone? Again, just, you know, just anticipating, looking, you know, keeping alert. You know, there are things -- Someone with, you know, headphones in their ear, they don’t even hear you. Sometimes, you know, not to scare a bicyclist, when I’m creeping -- when I’m getting closer to another one, either on the street or on the bike path, I’ll call out to them, I’ll say “good morning” or “hello” or “on your left” if I’m passing them, and sometimes they don’t even react, and you look, and they have headphones on or they’re having a conversation. And, you know, I just -- you try to let them know. There was an incident once: the guy started yelling at me – it was going over the Manhattan Bridge, and he had headphones on, listening to, and he was just not going in a straight line, just swerving back and forth, and I’m trying to pass him, so I tapped him on the shoulder as -- and, you know, he starts yelling and screaming – of course, I outran him – but, you know, it’s just -- he was on one of those Citibikes, so I knew he couldn’t get much speed. But, you know, people not -- not paying attention are one of the biggest hazards. People not aware of their -- of other people. Yeah.**

[f/u Q: Anything else you would name? As common dangers or hazards?]

**You know, people with dogs also – there are -- you know, they have retractable leashes, and they just -- you know, you have to be careful of that. That’s also a – and again, you know, I have a bell, I yell, you know. And I find the bell isn’t always useful: you have to, you have to yell. You have to, you know – yeah.**

1. Are there dangers or hazards that are difficult or impossible for a bicycle rider to see and react to? Are there particular things you do while riding to avoid those?

**Yeah, I guess, you know, I guess it’s the same as above. And one of the things I do to avoid it is ride earlier in the morning when there’s less traffic. You know, with getting out by -- gotta – you know, the sun is out at 5:30, I would love to be out at 5:30, but that’s not -- you know -- 7 o’clock, eight o’clock, I’m usually out, it’s -- there’s a lot less traffic, and, and, you know, it’s more pleasant. It’s more pleasant.**

[f/u Q: Anything else you want to add there?]

**No, that’s all I have written on that – yeah, just riding earlier.**

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

**Okay, again, you know, the earbuds, you knlw, listening to music, phone conversations. Salmoning – which is riding against traffic. I never understood that. But, but – you know, that, that -- And they refuse to move, if you go – you know – they’re the ones that should be -- they have a better view of oncoming traffic – I have to move out of the way.**

[f/u Q: they’re coming straight at you?]

**Yeah, yeah, yeah – with riding two or three across – you know, that’s, that’s -- I understand, you’re having conversations with people and that’s fine and well and good, but be aware that there are other people on the road.**

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?

**Okay. I thought about this. You know -- Triple A, the automobile club of America, they offer, it used to be called defensive driving, and they changed it to Driver Safety Program. I’m one of those people that still goes to them every few years. They look – you know, most of my friends, they laugh at me -- they pay some guy twenty dollars, you know, just to get the discount. I go to the thing because there’s always something to learn. A refresher -- It’s a refresher course. If something – you know, you can’t mandate it – right? you know, if something along the lines of the way that is set up – and, yeah, no one’s going to want to – look, it’s an all-day thing, it sucks, you know, but you know what? I learn something every time I go to these things. And that’s what I think, I think, you know -- I become more aware of problems or what I’m doing wrong after I take that course. So if there was something like that, that’s how -- I would model it after that. There’s no more -- you know what, people today, you know, I think they’re just – they’re out for themselves, and they don’t, you know -- If more people did that class for the driving, it would translate to their, to their riding, their bicycle riding. So how, you know -- That’s my answer to that.**

[f/u Q: Any specific instructions that you’ve learned from the adult driver safety… ?]

**Signal. Signal, signal, signal. It drives me crazy when, you know, when driving – or people, they don’t let you know where they’re going to be. Cars that want to turn, they don’t have their blinker on. That goes, you know, for bicyclists as well – they make a turn in front of you. Let people know. And I’m always – you know, if I’m going to turn, I’m pointing, if I’m going to shift lanes, I let people, you know -- I point to the lane, I’m going into the next lane. You know -- Signal, let people know what’s going on, what you’re going to do, what you intend to do.**

[f/u Q: Anything else you would -- ?]

**Yeah, I wrote down: you can’t teach manners on that. That was my first gut reaction, but then I thought about it, and I said, you know, the defensive, the driver safety thing is -- and signaling. That’s the – that’s the big thing: let people know, you know – cars – bikes, cars -- the cars, and bikes for everyone else – you know, let people know what you’re going to do.**

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.

**My eyes are always moving. I’m looking at the sidewalk, who’s walking, who I – again, if I see someone walking perpendicular to the pavement, that means they’re going to head out into the street. I’m constantly turning my head, you know, one, for practice for when I do need to turn my head to see if, you know …. Sometimes people are afraid to take their eyes off the road, but I turn my -- to see what’s behind me, what kind of cars are behind me, eyes constantly moving, looking back, you know, turning the body, hand signals, you know -- I’m alert as possible. You know -- It is draining sometimes, but you know what? I’d rather do that than spend a couple of days in the hospital. You know -- Let cars know what you want to do, you know, to keep the traffic flowing, you know, if everybody’s moving and everyone’s letting each other know, you can, you know -- you can make the light. You can – you know, you can – Yeah, that’s what I would --These are things that I do. You know -- Constantly just looking back and forth, not, you know -- checking everything, you know – you see a car just pulled into a spot, you know the guy’s going to get out soon, in a couple seconds, so either – so slow up and see what his intentions are doing or make sure there’s no cars, you know, behind you that -- so when you swerve you don’t get creamed. Yeah, that’s – that’s – that’s about – That’s what I do.**

[f/u Q: Anything else you want to add to that?]

**No, that’s all I have on that.**

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

**You know, I ride my – you know, most of the bicycles I have, they’re clipless or the cage type, so I’m strapped in, so if -- when I come close to an intersection, if it’s, like, a stop sign or if I’m -- the light’s turning yellow and stuff, the first thing I do is I get out – I get one foot out of the pedal, you know, it’s – you know, prepared to -- so I’m one step ahead if I have to, you know, make an emergency stop or something, so I don’t fall over – yeah. And I guess, that goes the same for the traffic signals -- traffic signs and signals, you know – I unhook one of my feet.**

* Traffic signs and signals
* Right-of-way

**Whoever gets there first should have the right-of-way, but that doesn’t, you know -- sometimes you see these guys in these big trucks – you’re on a bicycle and they just want to mow -- you know, mow you over. People -- I shouldn’t say guys – people with big trucks, you know, just want to – but, you know -- whoever gets there first, and, you know -- the people to the right, you know, these things you learn in the safety course.**

[f/u Q: Do you feel that there’s anything particular you need to do with regard to the right-of-way to stay safe?]

**No – not really. Look – If somebody’s moving -- If someone’s in a car, you know, and they want to take – You know, I’m on a bicycle, I’m going to let them go – you know -- there’s no way I’m going to stop them. But, you know – there should – you know -- whoever gets there first should have the right-of-way, the person to the right, whatever.**

* Pedestrians

**They pretty much have the right-of-way. You know, when I come to a crosswalk and someone’s walking by, I don’t go past them, I don’t try to, you know -- I stop and let them cross in front of me.**

* Speed

**In what regard? I like going fast. I’m, know—I try to – but, you know, again, it’s – you know, I’m doing 20-22 miles an hour, yeah, if I hit someone it’s going to hurt – you know – but --**

[f/u Q: in terms of riding safely, how does speed relate to that?]

**I guess I’m – Look, I’m not riding, you know, 20 miles an hour if it’s a heavy traffic zone. But if the traffic is slowing, or if I’m on a bike path, you know, I’m going – and again, I’m looking far ahead if -- you know, if someone’s walking a dog, and they’re, you know -- I’m conscious, I slow up to make sure that – you know, I don’t want to run a dog over, you know, so– yeah, again, you’re just conscious of – I’m conscious of it, but I’m, you know – I’m trying to keep up with traffic.**

* Respect

**Again, you know, if someone’s crossing in front of me, you know, walking in front of me, I stop, I’m not -- I’m not` try -- especially if it’s an older person, you know, or -- I’ve had instances where, you know, I stop and someone else, you know, blows past, and I’m, like, you know --- let the people go, what’s the matter? You know, Let the people go – go behind them, don’t go in front of them – if you’re going to cut in front, you know -- go behind them. But – yeah.**

* Trucks, buses

**I try to get in front of them. If I’m at a red light, I try to let them know that I’m there. I don’t stay to the side of them. I sort of put my – I stay -- In case they make a turn without signaling or whatever, or maybe they put their signals on after I’m on the side of them -- I get in front when I’m at a red light, so that they see -- I’m more visible to them. I don’t stay, you know, directly behind the crosswalk, you know, next to them.**

* Parked cars

**Yeah -- Same thing – you know, I’m always seeing: is there a head in there? Is it -- You know, if there’s kids in there? You know, if I’m riding on the side of the street, if it’s a one-way street and I’m riding on the passenger side, you know, of a parked car, and there’s kids in there, you know, I’m much more careful, because they’re just going to swing the door right open. So again, just, you know, looking in to see what it is – did they just get in? Did they just get out? Are they – you know -- Yeah – that’s it.**

* “Taking the lane”

**Yeah, I will let the – you know -- I -- What comes to mind with that is that, if there is a double-parked car, and I’m going at a good speed or, you know -- I will look over my shoulder – if there’s a car right directly next to me, of course, I’m going to let him go, but if there’s one a little bit far back, I will point into that lane, you know, like a hard point: I’m taking that lane, you know – yeah. I do take the lane when, when I can, you know, when I -- I’m, I don’t want to say, aggressive, but , but, you know, I -- I will take a lane if, you know -- given the opportunity. Yeah.**

* Pet peeves

**Again, going back to before -- you know, headphones and, you know, conversations on the phone – you know, there’s other people around, there’s people, you know -- whether you are in traffic – whether, you know, people just want to get – people just -- you know -- park and make your phone call -- you know – again, people salmoning. (I can’t get that word right.)** [I understand you.]  **Yeah, yeah -- it bothers -- Look, I do – if I’m a block off or something, you know, I’ll – but I -- but I’ll sort of use my bike as a scooter if I do that, if I go, you know -- I don’t ride the bicycle, you know, I’m on the, you know -- People on the sidewalk – I still see young -- you know, adults -- you know, kids okay, I get it, but I see adults on the side- , riding on the sidewalk, and they should not be. Yeah, that about – yeah, as far as pet peeves go.**

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

**You know -- I think I pretty much covered it all. You know, I did write down in here about the, you know, the safety course that AAA offers. And just – that was, you know -- when I got to that -- when I got to that point, I just, I said, that’s a -- Just to let you know who has the right-of-way and what the traffic signals mean. You know -- It’s a good -- but nobody takes it – I’m telling you, I’m the only one, I’m that idiot that sits there for, you know, 6 hours on a Saturday – but I get something out of it, you know, and not just the deduction on -- the reduction on the insurance. And it’s -- do you know what’s interesting? When I do take that course, the subject of bicycles does come up. And the older people will bemoan: oh, bicyclists, they’re the worst! *Older* meaning late 60s, 70s and above. The younger people, younger than that, they’re like, okay, they’re here, and, you know, we ought to learn how to – how to get along. But it’s the old- -- You know, I guess -- that group will be dying out soon, you know, not -- hopefully not too soon, but -- you know -- so -- that’s when the change is going to happen, when the old – when the old guard, people who it’s new to them to give respect to a bicyclist. The people who come up with it now, who are learning about it now, are the ones that are going to make the difference. That’s – I keep going back to that and I shouldn’t, because it’s a bicycle thing, not a – but it is a safety issue, so, yeah, I will, I will stick with that, I will stick with that.**

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