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

**Interview Questions**

**#5, Sheepshead Bay Cycle Shop, recruited 8-4, interviewed 8-6-2018.**

**TO101E05.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?

**Caucasian, Italian-American**

1. What is your gender?

**Male**

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

**High School ….. College actually, but I didn’t graduate.**

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

**Well, I guess there’s different levels of seriousness. So I have been serious about cycling for about 5 years now, but I have been riding since high school – so, depends on, really, the level of engagement.**

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

**I have only lived in Brooklyn, so, over – let’s say, over thirty years.**

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

**I would consider myself more careful – absolutely, more careful than most.**

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

**I have, but nothing too – let’s say -- violent. They were more of minor incidences. And I would say, over the last three years, I may have had two minor instances. I’ve had many close calls, but let’s say two altercations when I actually touched the vehicle. Minor, very minor.** [And when did you say that was?] **In the last two years. I don’t think I had any accidents this year, meaning I have not touched another vehicle, or another vehicle has not touched me while I was riding or stopped. But I believe I had two minor incidents last year.**

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?)

**Oh -- Main purpose is exercise. That’s the main purpose. Also – commuting. I do commute occasionally. And also, you know, a form of tourism, you know, I travel by bike as well.** [Long trips?] **Yeah.** **I’ve done several multi-day trips. I, you know, have plans to go away once or twice more this year. Yeah.**

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

**Oh, okay. I actually have pretty good numbers on that, and I’d have to go into some of my exercise, but, you know, why don’t we just say -- like, I have programs -- let’s see – I have, like, a training profile. Do you need an exact number, or we could just --** [No, no, just - ] **On average, 10 hours a week on a bike, so where – how many – what are we, 35, 35 or so weeks into the year, is that right? Give or take.** [….You said you essentially ride about 10 hours a week?] **Uh huh – yeah.**

1. On average, how long (in minutes) did you ride each time you go bicycling? Not asked.
2. How much of your bicycle riding took place when there was a lot of motor vehicle traffic?

**Well, I mean, in the City, there’s always motor vehicle traffic. There are just different levels of traffic. You know -- In the morning, there’s probably less traffic, and then as the day go along and the evening -- My evening commutes tend to be more traffic. Substantially more.**

[f/u Q: About what % of your riding would be when it’s particularly busy traffic?]

**Busy traffic – well – yeah, I’m kind of fortunate in a way from where I live, I have an ability to escape traffic – minimum, you know – I’ve -- it’s kind of a blessing in a way. You know, to -- I seek out, like most cyclists seek out, roads that are less busy, or you get on a bike path, or you get on a street that only has one-sided traffic. So I happen to be in an area where I live where traffic is not as much of an impact on me – or vehicles. And I try to get off the, you know, roads as soon as possible, so I’m kind of close to a greenway. So, the faster I can get on the greenway, the better. And sometimes I look at it as, you know, take your time, just make sure you get on the greenway. And that’s -- that is -- that definitely hinges on traffic, yeah. So – your question was – how are my rides impacted by traffic? Or -- ?**

[I was just trying to get a feel for how much you’re actually riding with real heavy traffic.]

**So, real heavy traffic -- I would want to say somewhere between 20 and 30 percent.**

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

**Oh, okay – yeah. So I have right now on my bike about 3,000 miles currently this year from January. I would say somewhere in the vicinity of about 300 miles were in the dark, which would put it somewhere around 10%. And that’s might be a little on the excessive – it’s probably closer to between 5 and 10%. But I train all winter, I ride all winter, I mean, so it’s hard not to be exposed to darkness in the winter, it’s just pretty much -- So I would get home from work at 5 and I would train for an hour and a half. If the weather wasn’t too bad, it would be outdoors, and that’s all in the darkness. So, yeah, I would have to say, a good portion. I’ll let you go to the next question.**

*Primary study questions:*

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

**From the perspective of safety – well, to me -- I guess you learn a little bit about how motorists and cyclists and pedestrians interact. There is a bit of a yin and a yang, or a nuance. You know, there are governing traffic rules and that is of, let’s say, pre-eminence to anything, but I also think that there’s some level of learning that everybody -- all commuters and all travelers seem to pick up on, how things kind of work, how buses work, how car- how buses -- some tendencies of drivers, some tendencies of cyclists -- see, you kind of pick up on how things go, and as far as, like, safety? I think safety is really an issue of, like, respect, having respect for one another, respect for the road, sharing the road. You know, I hear cyclists too. Their viewpoint is one thing, and then I talk to motorists and their viewpoint’s the opposite; sometimes I feel like there’s, like, no connection between the two, or at least it’s – or maybe there is, but, you know, it’s not verbal, you know, it’s not verbal – so, I don’t know if I’m answering that question.**

[f/u Q: Let me explore a little bit. You mentioned the term yin and yang, which sounded interesting. I wonder if you can talk more about that.]

**I guess I mentioned that in the context of, like, a nuance, like, how things work: like, there’s governing traffic rules. I guess there’s a way to – like, my son’s just learning how to drive – I probably wouldn’t be the person that would teach him how to drive. Like, I think -- There’s tendencies and habits that people develop through years of driving and cycling, so if you really want to learn the basics, I think it’s best to hire a professional to teach someone how to, let’s say, become a cyclist or become an automotive operator, a driver of a car. But I think as years go on, or as things progress in the City, people – you learn -- you learn tendencies about certain people or drivers. And I’m not trying to portray any particular group, but I would definitely feel as though afternoon drivers are more aggressive than early morning drivers, so, like, that’s a tendency that I think I picked up on. People want to get home from work… (garbled)…. at night – or a, you know -- or a car -- I feel like the late afternoons or the early evenings is when everybody’s kind of out there-- So getting back to the yin and yang, if you want me to -- I guess the yin and yang is just a perception of balance between drivers and cyclists. Just like I said earlier about respect of one another and trying to understand, you know, how things work. Sometimes it’s not just a formula of how things work but more or less a fluid relationship that -- that kind of evolves over time. Like – five years ago, we didn’t have Uber and Lyft in the City, so if you were a cyclist five years ago, you probably have a different perception on cars based on the introduction of new cars. Ten years ago, 15 years ago, we may have had less Access-A-Rides. I remember when I was a kid, we didn’t bus – there were very few buses, yellow buses – right? – taking children around the neighborhood – from their homes to schools. Everyone went to the local schools, so if you were a cyclist 25 years ago, you have a different perspective of all those developments. And think of it from a – I’m thinking about it from a cyclist, but think about it from a, you know, a car -- a driver: you have all bike lanes now – those lanes were either parking spots, or they were lanes for driving, so that’s evolved on them. Instead of having -- Nobody commuted by bike years ago, so now you have 10,000 people commuting by bike every day, so there is a fluid relationship between motorists and cyclists and pedestrians, and it’s evolving, and it’s changing. ….. [garbled] ….. you know, what the goals is, you know, what’s everybody’s reason for doing what they do?**

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?

**All right. First off, I would say that there’s a lot of cyclists that do not obey traffic laws. And I think that’s a big hazard. I also feel it from the interaction with vehicles -- I feel as though the two incidents that I had were actually identical, which was a car that passed me, and then I was in the bike lane – I’m in the bike lane and a car passed me, and then at the last minute decided he wanted -- the person wanted to make a right turn. So they saw me as they went past me because they went by me and then either saw a parking spot or realized they needed to get fuel, so they made a quick right-hand turn. So what happens is, sometimes bike lanes move faster than vehicles, right? So if you’re on a bicycle and you’re moving 12 miles an hour and there’s bumper-to-bumper traffic -- the vehicles, you could go past them in the bike lane. They danger area is when a vehicle doesn’t anticipate a bicycle coming from behind them. They know that the car cannot get into that zone that’s -- that they’re leading to, but they forget there’s cyclists coming up from behind. That happened to me twice last year – it was the identical situation, where I was passing the car on my right, and the car put out a signal and decided to turn. That’s a – that’s a danger. I also feel as though, obviously, left-hand turns are a big problem.**

[f/u Q: Left-hand turns by automobiles?]

**By automobiles.**

[f/u Q: Just to clarify, you’re talking about automobiles that are going in the same direction you’re going, or coming at you from the other direction?]

**Coming at – they’re going in the same direction, so it’s a situation where you’re going – well, actually, you’re coming from opposite directions – it would be like a head-on situation, I’m going east, the car’s going west, and a left-hand turn. So a left-hand turn would put that car coming in front of my path – those would be the most dangerous turns, because it’s a timing issue – they see the light -- the light may be ch- , or it could be the cyclist trying to rush up to the light so that they don’t get caught at the light. There’s a lot of different perspectives on that, but I think in general that interaction of that space on that left-hand turn is probably the most dangerous. I mean, UPS doesn’t make left-hand turns.** [Really?]  **Yeah.** [I didn’t know that]  **All their trucks are routed for right-hand turns. From drop to drop to drop, there’s no left-hand turns.** [That’s really interesting.] **If you travel in Europe, they minimize left-hand turns. That’s why in New Jersey, they have jug handles, where you come around. Left-hand turns are definitely – well, for me, that’s the way accidents happen.**

For those hazards that you’ve described, are there particular things that you have learned to do while riding to avoid them?

**So, it’s about, like, anticipation, like, you know, you have to be very alert. So – you know -- This is where it’s kind of close, and you have to, you know, do what you can do to avoid a situation. That’s really it – you need to figure out how to avoid bad situations, whether that means, you know, doing something differently on your own or just being more cautious and careful.**

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

**Oh yeah, I think I read that question, because….. (garbled) ….. Things that are impossible for you to react to – (long pause) -- No, I wouldn’t think so. I think there’s got to be – you know, I can’t really think of anything that is impossible. I mean, even on a mechanical, like, you would say, like a flat tire, like you’re riding and then all of a sudden your front tire blows out – you know -- that could be a dangerous situation – but for some of -- for some level, you know, there is maintenance, so if you need to -- you know, you have to do a pre-trip inspection. I wouldn’t say I’m always on top of that, but I do check my bike out or listen to my bike, but -- As far as hazards: potholes -- vehicles -- Are there hazards or dangers that are difficult or impossible for a bicycle rider to see and react to? No, I would have to say that’s really something I don’t think I have an answer for. Yeah.**

Are there particular things you do while riding to avoid them?

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

**Going through red lights. So, that’s a whole perspective, like – I don’t know -- I -- you know – cyclists do -- some of them slow down and then go through certain red lights. Some of them just cruise through red lights, speed through red lights. I also feel as though -- to me, cyclists – my biggest problem with cyclists and red lights is the interaction with the pedestrians in the crosswalks. You know, so it’s one thing for you to go through a red light upon knowing that another car is not moving in that direction, but you still have to have an utmost respect for people that are crossing in that crosswalk. And I think that’s a real concern that I see, it’s an unfortunate -- and I think that’s why cyclists really earn a little bit of their -- the ire of, you know, the public. I think – I think – you know, the interaction with cars is one thing, but to interact with people that are on the streets walking or, you know, doing other forms of exercise like running – yeah, I think that’s a big prob- to me, that’s – that’s my biggest issue with cyclists and how they interact with pedestrians – not so much how they interact with cars, but how they interact with pedestrians.**

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?

**The main thing is that you’ve got to have just a level of respect for everybody that’s out on the road – that’s first and foremost to me – I mean - I – I don’t -- I don’t feel it’s necessary to impose your will or your agenda on anyone else. I think you could take care of your own business – I think you can take, you know -- do what you need to do as a cyclist and not put anybody in, like, you know, a dangerous situation, or even an inconvenient -- or a situation where they’re just not happy with you. Yeah, respect for – respect for others really is my biggest thing.**

[f/u Q: Is there anything you would want to add or say with respect to that question?]

**Yeah, I’ll think about that -- Cycling, for me, is – it really changed who I am. I’ve met a lot of really nice people through cycling, I travel to many different places, both near and far; I have a passion for cycling, and, like, a -- I have a passion for cycling-based experiences, whether they’re challenging or just enjoyable. I would say to – you know --I would like to say to people that were taking up the sport: be open to what the sport of cycling could do for you. It’s done a lot for me.**

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.

**So I like to move at the speed everybody else is moving. So I do keep, like, a keen eye on – I keep -- I try to keep my speed relative to everybody else’s. I don’t like to go too fast or too slow, because – there’s almost -- and that goes back to a little bit of the -- what I was talking about earlier as a nuance. I feel that, as a cyclist, you can’t be too shy and you also can’t be too bold. It’s kind of like a sweet spot which kind of gains a little bit of respect of the people that are around you. You know – you -- You have domain over certain parts of the road. A vehicle who may be two feet to your left also has domain over their space in the road, and that’s a healthy respect that everybody has for one another. So if I’m riding down the street right now, I’m trying to dictate my domain – where I’m going. I’m not, you know, erratic, where I’m going fast and then slow, I’m not erratic where I’m going left and right, I try to stay straight. I try to keep a nice peripheral vision, but really dictate that my bike is going into an area that is safe for me to travel in.**

**And -- So the question continues on – “Tell me all the different things …..avoid a crash or collision” -- So I may be pointing out spaces -- so if I’m riding down a street and I need to move over to the left because there’s a double-parked car in front of me, I’ll point to an area in which I’m going. I may lift up my arm to, you know, caution a driver that I’m going to the -- [**Q: like a hand signal?] **Like a hand signal, yeah. I’ll point to an area where -- that – that goes back to the question of dictating domain, you know. I’ll point to an area, and I’m saying, that area now, I’m going to be moving into that direction, and that’s, like, a domain, I’m dictating the domain of where I’m going. And I’m not doing that because I’m saying “That’s my space”, but I’m communicating to the other driver that I need that space. Now if I was not in a position to dictate that domain, I may have to change my course, like if the car is already in front of me or alongside of me, I can’t just say, “You need to slow up for me to go in front of you.” – right? So it’s all about respect for one another. But if I’m in a position where I’m ahead and I notice the vehicle is behind me, I will say, “I need that space, I need a chance to move over.” And then I may speed up to kind of scoot around the double-parked car. So -- Another thing obviously is lights I sure like -- lights are important, so I put lights on my bike – simple lights: red in the back, white in the front – I like the ones that flash, they give you a little bit more attention than the ones that stream the light. They’re basically all on my bike. I mean -- I think this is the last week where the sun sets after 8 p.m. – it’s now 8:09, it’s kind of dusk. I think within another two weeks, the sun will be setting before 8 p.m., so we’re going into a season where you need your lights. I actually was looking at lights the other day on-line that start to flash when you move and then shut off and save battery when you’re, let’s say, not moving, and you don’t have to – don’t have to turn them off – so, you know, lights are actually pretty important, so – I definitely put them on my gear or on my bike. I feel like that helps me avoid crashes. And collisions: hand motions like we said, and just generally keeping myself in a safe, you know, safe riding place – as -- you know – get off -- get on the greenway as much as possible.**

**Oh actually, getting back to something that we were talking about before – you know, I brought up the point of the evolution between cars and cycles, how it went from, you know, more taxis – you know, Ubers and Lyfts, they weren’t there -- but think about the e-bikes now, so now that’s a whole new genre of bicycles, and I feel they don’t -- probably on the list of the most dangerous out there, especially on the delivery side. They travel very fast. A lot of cyc—a lot of motorists confuse e-bikes with cyclists. I don’t even consider an e-bike someone who’s cycling. They’re like little mov- you know -- motorscooters – I mean, they can move 25 miles an hour without pedaling, uphill. You know, to me I -- I f- – and they go in all different – like – they go up -- and this is also getting back to the point before, that I was talking: following traffic patterns – don’t go up a one-way street in the wrong direction, even if it does take you a minute-- you know -- So I feel like, you see a lot when you’re on the street and put 3,000 miles on your bike and probably 2,000 of them came in Brooklyn and New York, you know, it’s, like, you see a lot – so you see all these things that are on the street, but -- yeah, e-bikes definitely a new evolution in, you know, the mix of cars, pedestrians, and cyclists, that’s definitely a new one. I see it in the parks – I personally feel e-bikes shouldn’t be allowed in the park. To me, I think it’s a – you know, even though they’re pedal-assisted, you don’t see people pedaling. You see them doing 20+ miles an hour, not pedaling. You know -- and a lot of times, I hate to say it, they’re from delivery. So it’s a short cut for a food delivery person to get from one place to the other and they shoot through a park, and I just don’t think that’s right, but, you know, that’s me. We’ll go to the next question.**

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

**And, do you want, like, a one-word answer?**

[Any comments that would relate to bike safety, any other realizations.]

**Well, I mean, intersections is where you have to be most careful, for sure. That’s where, you know, whether it’s a two-lane section or more -- wherever you have that place where vehicles and everyone else are coming together, that’s where you got to be careful.**

* Traffic signs and signals

**Traffic signs and signals -- Not quite sure how to answer that, but I would say, follow their instructions.**

* Right-of-way

**Right-of-way to me is pre-eminent, very important, but it also means that everybody’s got to be on the same page with that, as far as right-of-way. I think that’s kind of important, I think everybody’s got their own feeling as to who has the right-of-way. It’s not always – well, hard to explain, but --**

* Pedestrians

**Pedestrians – yeah, I would like to get to a point where we had – what’d they call it? Zero -- or Vision Zero. Yeah, if we could get to Vision Zero, that would be a great thing. So, let’s keep pedestrians safe.**

* Speed

**Speed – that’s tricky --- speed is tricky – speed of vehicles or cyclists?** [However you want to answer that.] **Well, I guess it’s a level of confidence, right? I mean, cyclists really can’t break the speed rules, or for the most part they can’t, it’s kind of hard, but I guess for vehicles, they can very easily break speed rules, so -- but as a motorist, I’d like to say that you can’t exactly get from one place to the other at times without exceeding the speed limit a little bit. I think, between traffic and all the, you know, traffic lights, just navigating through the City – sometimes you just need to -- I don’t know what the speed limit is on every given block, but it seems like I probably would go over the speed limit. I just – I guess speeding to me doesn’t exactly correlate with being unsafe. I don’t se- I don’t have a direct correlation between the two. I mean, speed also -- I mean, I’m not talking about exc- -- like, grossly-excessive speeds, so -- you know, if you’re talking about a 25 mile-an-hour zone and you’re doing 35 – that’s doesn’t – I don’t think you can correlate speed with danger in that, but if you’re going 70 miles-an hour, then it’s a – well, it’s a different story.**

* Respect

**Respect – well, as I spoke about that earlier – you’ve got to have complete respect for one another. I think, to some extent that – you know – I want to say – let’s say it’s a work in progress – because I meet good people out there that are respectful to one another, and then I also meet people, I’m, like, I can’t believe that you just did that – and that -- sometimes, that’s cyclists too.**

* Trucks, buses

**Buses throw off a crazy amount of heat. You feel it and the humidity. Other than that, I think that’s great that they’re taking, you know, mass transit. Trucks, I got no problem with trucks. You know -- Designated truck routes – I don’t think the – you know, I don’t think they should have bike lanes on designated truck routes. They should probably – should keep those separate. That would be a good way to solve that problem.**

* Parked cars

**Parked cars – yeah - You just got to watch the doors when they open them. So -- other than that, no issues with parked cars.**

* “Taking the lane”

**Taking the lane -- What does that mean?**  [explanation provided.] **I tend to stay towards the outside of the lane, and then occasionally move into the lane. You know, when I spoke about that earlier: I sometimes have to pass something – maybe parked. But for the most part, I would say I tend to want to stay out of the lane, or as much out of the lane as I can. You know, and once again, you know, if you back up a minute, you see parked cars – You know, you don’t want to be, let’s say, 12 inches from a parked car, all right? so you want to give yourself a healthy space from cars that are parked, but also you don’t want to be in the middle of the street. So it’s a little bit of that dance that we do when we’re trying to be in a safe spot.**

* Pet peeves

**Not really any.**

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

**I think I did a good interview.**

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