



SUBSCRIBE

SIGN IN

# If You Wanna Know What It's Like to Be Black For a Day, Be a Cyclist

IT'S A JOKE, BUT I KEEP TELLING IT BECAUSE IT'S TRUE.

BY CHRISTOPHER STRICKLEN Jul 27, 2020



Chris Corona

I've made this joke so many times since I first started riding: "If you wanna know what to be Black for a day, be a cyclist."

You know what it's like when you're just cruising along, minding your own business, riding your bike on the shoulder or in the bike lane within the law and then a car, truck or semi comes buzzing close past you, almost taking you off your bike or almost killing you while they had a whole other lane they could have been driving in that would not have just jeopardized your life. That's what being Black is like everyday—on and off the bike. And, worst case scenario, you end up getting killed and the driver gets off due to inconsequential evidence. Sound familiar?

## RELATED STORIES



If You Love Cycling, You Need to Talk About Race



Black Riders Are Stopped By Police More Often

I don't necessarily think about my race or ethnicity every time I clip in on my bike. Hell, I don't think I wake up on a regular basis like, "Hello world! Another day as a black man. Let's see what struggles I will have to deal with today." Black people and Black struggle are not monolithic concepts. It also should not be over-dramatized. We wake up and take care of our responsibilities like every other culture.

**“This has been the biggest reality check that we have had in a long time.**

However, imagine having a friend that you spend every day with. You ride and train together, maybe you even work together and everywhere you go, for some reason, everything you do is received slightly different. People are either noticeably more awkward around you or they are noticeably less accepting of you. Being a Black cyclist usually carries a “sore thumb”

effect along with it. You stand out for no reason in particular based on your skin color because the sport does not represent us hardly at all.

ADVERTISEMENT - CONTINUE READING BELOW

---

I started riding in an area that is exceptionally white. All the people I've gotten to know are wonderful people and I attribute almost every opportunity that I've ever been given in cycling to those good white folk in Marin County. I don't really give people that I don't like an opportunity to interact with me long enough to present themselves as a racist. I'm a pretty good judge of character in that way and anyone who is an overt racist usually isn't the most discreet person in the world. I have zero problem calling an individual out on bullshit when I see it, let alone it being something racist towards me—that would be a huge issue.

Patrick Lee

I guess specifically in the cycling industry it's a little different. I don't have any examples of people putting Black cyclists in harm's way whether that be physical harm, financial harm or professional harm. But the industry has to start directing attention towards our people that want to be included.

People are the ones making decisions for companies, brands, and the like. We are not here sharing our stories with *Bicycling* because, on May 26th, the world flipped a switch and said, "Hey, maybe we should be a little more genuine about how we are treating minorities in our communities." We are having this discussion because a Black man was killed on camera and this nation, along with the rest of the world, violently erupted. This has been the biggest reality check that we have had in a long time. This ALL has come to a head due to unchecked bad human habits in culture, industry, and everyday life. Stop allowing the status quo to slide if the status quo is not open to all. Stop excusing behaviors because "that's just the way it/he/she/they are." Why is it essential for us to maintain this mediocrity? We've never said "America, the most mediocre country in the world!" So stop treating it that way. Rant over.

*Christopher Stricklen, 34, is a luxury retail sales specialist and photography hobbyist.*

Patrick Lee

---

MORE STORIES FROM BLACK PEOPLE WHO LOVE BIKES

---

---

MORE FROM  
**CULTURE**

**Why We Must Talk About Race**

**Black Riders Are Stopped By Police More Often**

ADVERTISEMENT - CONTINUE READING BELOW

---

**How Bike Riders Can Be Anti-Racist**

**I Got Stopped Riding Because I 'Fit' a Description**

**I Dream of a Day I Can 'Just Stick to Cycling'**

**I Love Being a Black Cyclist, But It's Exhausting**

**No, Bikes Don't Discriminate. But Cyclists Do.**

**Ask Yourself, Who Gets Left Behind in Cycling?**

**Nelson Vails: Black Lives Matter Opened My Eyes**

**If You Love Cycling, You Need to Talk About Race**



Culture **I Love Being a Black Cyclist, But It's Exhausting**

**What it Means to Never See Black People Out Riding**

**What it's Like to Commute to School Every Day for a Decade**

**What It's Like To Ride Paris Roubaix**

**Black Riders Are Stopped By Police More Often**

**What It's Like to Be a Magnet for On-Bike Harassment**

***Bicycling***



[Newsletter](#)

[Press Room](#)

[Give A Gift](#)

[Being Green](#)

[About Bicycling](#)

[Customer Service](#)


[Why Did I Get This Ad?](#)

[Community Guidelines](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[Advertise Online](#)

[Other Hearst Subscriptions](#)

 **Hearst Men's and  
Enthusiast Media  
Group - A Part of  
Hearst Digital Media**

A Part of Hearst Digital Media

Bicycling participates in various affiliate marketing programs, which means we may get paid commissions on editorially chosen products purchased through our links to retailer sites.

©2020 Hearst Magazine Media, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

[Privacy Notice](#)   [Your California Privacy Rights](#)   [Interest-Based Ads](#)   [Terms of Use](#)   [Site Map](#)

[Do Not Sell My Info](#)