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# THE BIKE BIT

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## Why I Ride.

This all came about because over the course of a single week in 1996, I was late for work 4 times solely because of traffic gridlock. I realised I had a motorcycle license, that I'd owned bikes previously, and that it seemed dumb not to get back into biking. I'm very pro-bike. I think they're a thrill to ride, I think the on-road camaraderie shown by motorcyclists could teach car-only drivers a thing or two.

Okay, so the first thing you're all thinking is this: "A bike? In the UK? Isn't that going to be a bit wet?". Well, it would be if I drove around in jeans and a T-shirt. But this is a common misconception of motorists. They can't think further than sitting in their own car. The answer, of course, is waterproofs. So you look like the Michelin man. So what? It's warm and dry. Modern materials are extremely good at keeping the damp out on a bike. "Oh. Okay ", I hear you saying,"but what about carrying capacity eh? No good for carrying things about are they?" Well not if you want to carry tins of paint or planks of wood. But when you're going in to an office job, the most you have is a briefcase or backpack. These fit easily inside the top pannier, and it's waterproof before you ask, or on your back. So which would **you** rather do? Would you rather sit in stationary traffic in all weathers, unable to move? Or would you rather have some fun, get to work on time and drive a motorbike?

**Remember that next  
time you're in your car!**

Since starting this page, we moved to America. For two years I pined to get back on a bike. One of my colleagues was no help - he's a rider and he kept letting me take his bike out on short spins around the parking lot. He also got another colleague into biking too. My itch became very strong and I needed to scratch it. I needed to scratch it with something German.....

## What I Ride.

Here's my progression of motorbike ownership since 1988. Anyone would think I liked enduro and supermoto type bikes..... Enjoy.

Single cylinder,  
80cc, two-stroke,  
air-cooled**Yamaha DT80.** This was my introduction to riding. I went through one piston on this bike - I still have it in my office. It was a loud little bumble-bee of a two-stroke bike.Single cylinder,  
125cc, two-stroke,  
water-cooled**Yamaha DT125.** Bigger and better. Louder, faster. Still small. Great bike.Parallel twin, 250cc,  
two-stroke,  
water-cooled**Yamaha TDR250.** The idiot-proof hooligan tool. Based on the race-bred TZR250, this was a wheelie machine. I used this bastard on the motorways every day and it was well scary. It has the typical two-stroke powerband where all the power arrives at 5000rpm and dies off at 5500rpm. Amazing bike.



Single cylinder,  
660cc, four-stroke,  
water-cooled

**Yamaha XTZ660 Tenere.** My first 4-stroke bike. A big-single - one cylinder, 660cc. A thumper of a bike, great for riding with a passenger but with possibly the least comfortable seat, ever.



V-twin, 750cc,  
four-stroke,  
water-cooled

**Honda XR750 Africa Twin.** Think Tim Taylor. More power! Arf arf arf! This was a fantastic bike. If I could get one here in America, I'd buy another one in a heartbeat. It did 120 miles a day for 18 months without a single problem. W-a-y better build quality than the Yamaha's I'd owned and supremely comfortable.



Boxer twin, 1150cc,  
four-stroke,  
oil/air-cooled

**BMW R1150GS.** The über-bike. The motosaurus. This thing rides like a dream, whether I'm on my own or with my wife. Even full-up with luggage doesn't seem to phase it. It's one sweeeet bike.



Boxer twin, 1200cc,  
four-stroke,  
oil/air-cooled

**BMW R1200GS.** The latest über-bike and the current object of my motorcycle lust. The first batch have some problems so I'm waiting for the second production run.....

## When I Ride.

Whenever it's not snowing. That's about it. I ride all 4 seasons of the year from the scorching summer when the tarmac is hot and sticky, to the wettest winter when the roads turn to teflon.

## When I Don't Ride - when the bike is in the shop.

The Beemer is barely ever unrideable. In fact its only been off the road for repairs once and that was a factory recall. However in January 2005 it was off the road for some engine maintenance - head de-coking, honing cylinder bores, cleaning pistons, new rings etc. I felt the need to give a plug to a new BMW mechanic in my area who did the work. So if you're cruising through Utah and find yourself in need of some BMW help, try Motorcycle Repair & Rendezvous. They're just off the side of I-15 at 7200S in Salt Lake City. Easy to get to if you're passing through. They have a full line of clothing and accessories, and most importantly, are run by a couple of friends of mine who are certified BMW mechanics. Perhaps most importantly they have coffee and doughnuts....  
[This is a link to their website.](#)



## What I Dislike about fair-weather bikers.

These are the guys who buy a 10-grand plastic crotch rocket, and then put 800 miles a year on it because they only bring it out when it's sunny and dry. They're afraid of getting any rain on their carefully spit-polished race exhaust and luminous pink headlamp cover. Now before I get under everyone's skin, let's make a quick distinction here. I've got no problem with the people who own these overpowered monsters and ride them so well that they're inconspicuous (ie. most of us). My bone of contention is with the Hooray Henrys who buy these bikes to go with their Armani suits and Rolex watches, just because Tim over in accounting got himself a Porsche last weekend. They don't use their motorbikes as a mode of transport, or a source of fun, but simply as a fashion accessory. They'll buy a Honda Super Blackbird, some race-replica one-piece leathers and a Doohan helmet, and assume that this means they can ride like Carl Fogarty. They then wonder what went wrong when they drive under a truck/into a car/into a tree/up a kerb/over a roundabout etc etc etc. You know the types. They have no regard for any other road users, other motorcyclists included. They shoot the gap at 80mph in stationary traffic, overtake on blind bends, scare the crap out of car drivers and give the rest of us a bad image.



The media love an easy target, and these guys give them the target they need. The result is that the rest of us all get tarred with the same brush. So if you're a stockbroking yuppie who's bought himself a nice toy, do us a favour and sell it would you? Go and ride around in Tim's Porsche instead. There's a good chap.

## Helmets vs. 'invincible' bikers.

Living in America now, it amazes me how many states don't have helmet laws. It amazes me even more that one of the states did have a helmet law, but repealed it in 2003 because of complaints that it was infringing on people's civil liberties and their rights to 'freedom'. Some riders believe they're invincible, some think that because they ride slow-and-straight cruisers, any crash will be mild. All of these people are simply wrong. It's pretty obvious to anyone on a bike that you're very vulnerable in any crash. If you want to have a nervous moment, next time you overtake a semi, slow down and take a quick look at the wheels and driveshafts spinning next to you.....

Proper clothing isn't really an option when riding a bike - it's a necessity. It has nothing to do with your freedom, and everything to do with giving you a fighting chance when you come off. Some people's self-preservation instinct is functioning so badly that their brains don't even have the common sense to wear a helmet to protect the very skull that contains them. Face it - any crash over about 15mph and you're going to hurt if you don't have protective gear on. Any crash involving another vehicle and it will be much worse. (Bear in mind that over 60% of motorcycle crashes are caused by a car or SUV driver.)



Flip flops, sandals, T-shirts, O.R. scrubs - apparently these two future bodybag occupants are too stupid to be breathing, let alone riding a bike.

Every weekend I see guys on sports bikes charging along the freeways. But occasionally, I see something truly ridiculous. For example, a guy riding in shorts, flip-flops, and a t-shirt. No helmet, no gloves, no armour or padding. Exactly what does this guy think is going to happen to him when he comes off? Does he think he'll never come off? If that's the case, he's more dangerous than he thinks. Does he somehow think he'll be thrown clear? Great - what happens when he lands? Does he think it will all happen in a nice controlled fashion so he can control how he falls and what happens in the crash?.....For the uninitiated, then, here is:

### The anatomy of a motorbike crash

You see the car pull out from the side road as you're approaching. You didn't leave enough safety sphere around you so it looks like a crash is inevitable. You check behind you, and grab a fistful of brake lever and clutch. You stomp on the rear brake and the back wheel locks. The bike starts to skid sideways as the rear end comes out. Because the wheels have stopped, the gyroscopic stabilising effect has gone and the bike is now top-heavy. You're getting closer to the car and he's now seen you and has stopped instead of pulling out of the way - a crash is now certain. The bike starts to go down and then the tyres dig-in and the bike high-sides you. You're about 60° to your original direction of travel now and you're flipped over so you're now lying on the ground skidding head-first towards the car with the bike on top of you. Your bike boots are stopping your foot from being crushed and the padding in your jacket and pants is rapidly shredding - sacrificing itself for your skin. Your head bounces off the road and the shock stuns you and makes you dizzy. Disoriented, you put a hand out and your glove starts to burn as the leather and padding rubs away on the road surface. You're almost upon the car now and in the last moments, you crumple like a rag-doll and slam into the side of the car head-first with the bike on top of you. The change in speed causes the momentum of the bike to flip up into the side of the car. You still have one leg over the saddle so this forces you to do the splits and flicks that leg off into the car door. As everything comes to rest, the bike falls back on your foot and the crash is over.

Of course, that all happened in slightly under a second, and what you remember is sky-ground-sky-ground-sky-ground-car.....I'll leave you to re-write that paragraph from the point-of-view of someone wearing no helmet and no protective gear, crashing on a motorway at 130km/h.

### The anatomy of the same crash from your passenger's point of view if you have one.

You see the car pull out from the side road as you're approaching. Your rider looks over his shoulder, and grabs a fistful of brake lever and clutch. He stomps on the rear brake and the back wheel locks. The bike starts to skid sideways as the rear end comes out and you start to shift on the pillion seat. Because the wheels have stopped, the gyroscopic stabilising effect has gone and the bike is now top-heavy. You're getting closer to the car and he's now seen you and has stopped instead of pulling out of the way - a crash is now certain. The bike starts to go down and then the tyres dig-in and the bike high-sides you. You're catapulted up in the air like a cat on a trampoline. As you spin end-over-end, you see your rider pinned under the bike skidding head-first towards the car. As you start to descend from your parabolic flight, you see the see your rider crumple up like a rag doll and slam into the side of the car head-first. The change in speed causes the momentum of the bike to flip up into the side of the car. As you plummet towards the resulting melee, you see the rider still has one leg over the saddle. As everything below you comes to a rest, you land head-first on a wrecked bike and car combo and the rider's trapped foot catches you in the stomach. You decelerate at about 40G

and come to rest on the wreckage, and the crash is over.



This little scene took all of 2 seconds to set up.  
Note the non-bike boots that came off and the blood from the head-ground (no helmet) interface...

**What about the lawyer option?** Yes? What about it? Came off your bike and you've got a lawyer suing the motorist - great. Money isn't going to reverse brain damage. It won't heal road-rash. It doesn't cure incurable stupidity.

Ok so don't go the whole leather biker thing if you don't want, but use some common sense. Why the protective gear? Well...

#### **Helmet**

Protects your noggin from splitting open like a ripe watermelon.

#### **Boots**

Proper bike boots have a heavy steel shank in them. If you wear trainers, then when the bike keels over and lands on your foot during a crash, the sole of the trainer crushes and the bike mangles your foot against the road. With a steel shank in there, it provides a rigid sole that resists crushing.

#### **Gloves**

Look at your knuckles and the palm of your hand. Now scrape the palm of your hand with a pair of scissors, and run your knuckles along a brick wall. Hurts doesn't it? Do it over 15mph on a rough road and you'll understand the reason for gloves.

#### **Back-protector**

Ever felt how close your spine is to the skin - no muscles or padding there is there?

#### **Armoured jackets and pants**

Denim - great fashion accessory, lousy tear-resistance as indicated by the speed at which you can ruin a \$100 pair of Levis by falling over and scuffing the knees. Armour and padding in pants and jackets cushions your knees, thighs, shoulders and elbows - all parts of your body that will interface very quickly with the ground when you come off.

#### **Ok so what do you wear, Chris?**

Well, when I did my 120 mile-per-day commute, I wore all the above every day, rain or shine. Now my commute is 8 miles instead, I'm suffering a sense of delusion. For some reason, I think that it's safer to ride 8 miles than it is 120 miles. My rider gear now is similar to what this chap is wearing : denim (yes, I know!), helmet, gloves, boots and an armoured jacket. Even when the weather is 40°C outside, I still ride protected.



#### **"It'll never happen to me"**

You keep thinking that, then look at this picture and imagine its you. Blind car driver, red light. For the sake of your own protection, wear proper gear.





## An email from a non-motorcyclist.

I received this email on March 12th 2000, and it explains a great deal about why car-only driver behave the way they do. Read it and weep. I've published the guy's name at the bottom and his email address. If you feel he's a dick, go ahead and spam him. Note - I've pretty much left the grammar and spelling as it was...

*Having read your article on motorbikes I must strongly disagree that they are cool as they are hazards and should be banned. Firstly most accidents with severe injuries and death are motorbikers. Secondly today during a 4 miles trip to and from a local football ground where I work I was nearly killed twice by two motorbikers traveling behind car coming towards me and then overtaking in dangerous place causing myself to brake hard to avoid them. May I also remind you that if bikers hit cars the car will have a dent while the biker is in a wooden box. In my opinion the motorcycle is ok on holiday but in the UK stupid idea unless you're on a proper track. Also I have noticed that bikers have the beam on all the time firstly this is against the law and secondly it means the driver will probably be so annoyed that he will brake later knowing the car has four brakes and four wheels or tyres while the biker has two and will be launched over the car and then probably then be driven over certainly not to drive again. - Miles Stinger*

This guy has clearly missed the boat completely. He's right about the number of fatalities of course, but has completely missed the fact that over 60% of all motorbike accidents are caused by, and directly attributable to car drivers. His last statement was what made me publish this email and his name. This guy gets his kicks from brake-testing trailing motorcyclists in an effort to try and kill them. Can I say "TWAT" and get away with it? Of course I can - it's my site! More to the point, the freedom of information that the web gives means I can let you all know his email address so you can spam/flame/emailbomb him, or otherwise pass on your thoughts on this grade-A asshole. Its: [miler@miler.screaming.net](mailto:miler@miler.screaming.net)

I feel I ought to also point out a couple of flaws in Miles' comments, just in case there are any non-motorbike aware motorists out there.

1. Metre-for-metre, most bikes can haul up way quicker than a car.
2. If Miles tells us that in most car-bike accidents, the biker ends up in a wooden box whilst the car is only dented, then why does he think he was nearly killed twice in a 4 mile trip?
3. He's going to hate this one : all new bikes delivered in the UK have their lights permanently wired on now - you can't turn them off.

Just some food for thought.

## Good grief - another email from a non-motorcyclist.

I received this email on July 21st 2003, and it seems to have been written by a distant relative of Miles Stinger. It seems we're all "fat loser gaylords" who are antisocial and cause accidents. Emails like this are the reason for my rant about car drivers below....

*I'm sure you're far too busy to be troubled with trifling emails from idiot car drivers like me, but... The picture of "what a car driver sees" is of course the view from his back mirror (cf. the picture of "what a biker sees", which is his view from the front). It is completely insane to suggest that a biker has better road-vision than a car driver.*

*Furthermore:*

*1. That bikes are hard to see is not the fault of car drivers. Many more people want to drive cars than want to drive motorbikes, in both the UK and US. The percentage of bikes that get into accidents that harm car drivers is far higher than the percentage of cars that get into accidents that harm other car drivers. Therefore (and for other reasons as well, of course) biking is selfish and anti-social.*

*2. As far as speed limits are concerned, bikers break the law, all the time. All of them. And by a far greater margin than car drivers ever do. As far as I can tell, bikers, aside from a bit of muttering about 'bad apples', think that they are good enough riders to do this safely. Statistics show otherwise. Moreover, parliament has seen fit to set a speed limit which applies to skilled motorcyclists as well as mere car drivers, so you should stick to it. No car driver should ever have to take precautions against a biker coming round the corner at 150mph.*

*3. Almost all bikers are ugly. The only way you lot can look cool is by putting on a full-body costume and a helmet that covers your face. If you didn't we'd all be able to laugh at what a bunch of fat loser gaylords you are.*

*The overall tone of your website gives the impression that you are a complete cunt. So fuck off.*

*Andy Naylor.*

## Apparently the lunatics are on the radio too.

In January 2006, a popular San Francisco-area radio host (Woody, of 105.3) made some seriously anti-motorcycling comments in his morning broadcast. Woody told his listeners "One of my pet-peeves is people on motorcycles who think they don't have to wait in traffic like everybody else... Nothing would make me happier than to watch somebody, and I've actually seen this happen, somebody open a door and take you out as you are trying to squeeze through..."

Well, "Woody", it's not that we don't think we have to wait in traffic - we don't have to wait in traffic - we've had the common sense to try to solve the problem of traffic congestion by using a motorbike so we can take up less road space and get where we want to go on time. You are the idiot for sitting in your cage every day complaining and suggesting that other drivers try to murder motorcyclists. Because the premeditation you suggest means it wouldn't be manslaughter.....

[Motorcycle Daily](#) have the full story online.

## My rant about car-only drivers.

I ride a motorbike and I try to put to the back of my mind one simple truth : people who have never ridden a motorbike are blind to them - ie. most car drivers. As I stated above, over 60% of bike accidents are caused by car drivers. The Booth report, published in 1989, assessed nearly 10,000 motorcycle accidents. It concluded that nearly two-thirds (62%) of motorcycle accidents were primarily caused by the other road user. The report found that two-thirds of motorcycle accidents where the driver was at fault were due to the driver failing to anticipate the action of the motorcyclist or failing to see the motorcyclist.

Motorcyclists don't tend to just fall off their bikes for no reason. Now I know this will come as news to some of you, but it's true - we're actually pretty good at staying on our bikes until you fools put metal boxes in our way. I used to ride in England - 120 miles a day commuting to and from work along three of the busiest roads in the country; the M23, M25 and A23. I've figured out that there's really nothing I can do that will educate you car drivers into seeing me. I've had people look right at me, and still looking at me, pull out into the road. In the UK, it's called SMIDSY - Sorry Mate, I Didn't See You. This is normally what comes out of the mouth of a car driver once you're lying on the road with a broken limb and a written-off motorbike. And it's also the one response most likely to result in a violent lashing out from the motorcyclist. It's pretty obvious you didn't see him - he's lying under your freakin' car!

I tried all sorts of things to make myself more conspicuous - flashing lights, luminous strips, loud exhaust, bright clothes. Nothing works. We riders simply have to understand that as a bike rider, we will not be seen by the majority of car drivers. Not only do we have to understand that, but we have to deal with it. It's one of the reasons I love bikes like the BMW R1150GS - I'm up so high up that I can see what is happening way further ahead than most car drivers (and sportsbike riders for that matter). I've been riding for 14 years now - 12 in the UK, a 2 year gap, and just started again, now in the US. The attitude of car drivers is the same here as at home - they look, but they don't see. Making eye contact with these people is a myth too - remember they look, but don't see.

It remains, then, to the motorcyclist - you and me. The responsibility rests with us to ride according to the incompetence of car drivers. Most of them don't understand that they are accountable for their behaviour and actions, and most of them have their two A's mixed up - Ability and Ambition.

The best description I ever saw was the front page in a rider manual many years ago. It was a cartoon that simply said : "Before you ride, know your adversary is this person, no ifs ands or buts" and beneath it was a picture of a car with a guy in the drivers seats wearing dark glasses, a white cane between the seats and a labrador in the passenger seat.

The bottom line? As a motorcyclist, I'd be just as safe riding a black motorbike wearing black leathers at night with the lights off - because most car drivers will still see the same thing - empty road.

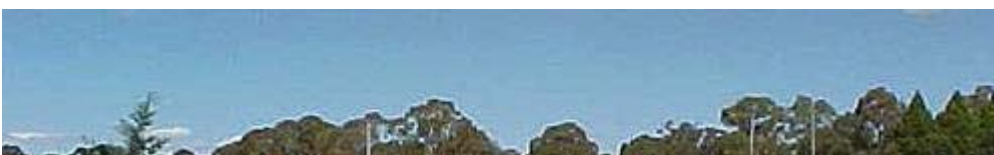
So if you drive a car, and don't ride a bike, and you've read this far, just think about this little rant the next time you go out in your car. See how many motorbikes you can spot if you actually look for them - you'll be surprised and shocked at how blinkered you normally are. USE YOUR EYES!



▲ What the average motorcyclist sees when riding ▲



▲ What the average motorist sees when driving ▲





▲ What's actually there ▲



▲ How a motorist sees the same scene ▲

## Threat perception and the average motorist.

The average motorist, when assessing a traffic scene, prioritises things mentally based on threat perception. They don't know they're doing it, but it turns out that a tall, thin object, like a motorbike, is perceived as less of a threat than a short, fat object, like a car. There's some talk of the position of lights on a motorbike helping out this mental awareness. If you put bright lights further apart than normal - say on outriggers - a motorbike will be perceived as more of a threat, and thus register higher in the motorist's scene analysis.

This is all very well, but how does the average motorist's brain deal with the threat perception of a hot cup of Starbucks and a cellphone first thing in the morning. Apparently, clamping a phone to their ear and drinking coffee while driving is also not perceived as a threat, whilst most motorists consider a motorcyclist threatening to look at (leathers, helmet etc - ooooooohhh. Scary....) Yet the same motorcyclist actually on a bike registers so low that the average motorist will look straight through them.

## Chris's tips for car-only drivers

(Because clearly millions of you need to be told)

### Eyes

You have two of these, normally located in the front of your head. Use them. Don't just look, but see what's going on. You might spot someone else on the road other than you. I know that comes as a surprise, but there are other people entitled to share the same road space with you. Here's something else - get them tested. In the UK, a 2003 study found that 1 in 7 drivers who didn't think they needed glasses had vision so bad that their licenses could have been revoked.

### Brain

You should have one of these. Most humans are issued with one as standard. It's used for a lot of things, and is certainly capable of multitasking. When you're using your eyes (see above) to look in your mirrors (see below), use your brain to interpret the information. Very handy.

### Mirrors

The shiny, reflective things in your car. You have at least one, and most modern cars have three. Interestingly, they're not for putting your makeup on, or adjusting your hair. They are in fact to help you use your eyes to see what's behind you without the horrible inconvenience of actually turning your head. Look in them occasionally, you'll be surprised at what you see.

### Indicators

You know those pretty little orange lights that light up the corners of your car? I hate to tell you, but they're not decorative elements put there by the designers on a whim. They actually have a purpose. For the 99.999% of us who can't read your thoughts, those are indicator lights, for you to use to indicate to us what you intend to do. They're operated by a stalk on the steering column - you should try them some time. Oh, and when you do, make sure you use them *before* actually turning. Like I said, most of the rest of us have trouble reading your mind.

### Steering wheel

The big circular thing you hold on to when driving. Apparently, not many of you realise that if you turn this, your car will drift from lane to lane. Most often, you also haven't grasped the basic use of the indicators (see above) so the result is that you'll change lanes, probably surprising yourself, and certainly surprising everyone behind you because you didn't tell us you were going to do it. By the way, when you do this, that grating, scraping, crashing sound from the back of the car isn't "ordinary car noises" - it means you've hit someone.

### Brakes

Now this is a complicated one. The middle pedal in your manual car, or the left pedal in your automatic, is there to slow you down, and even stop you. I mention this because it seems that when you've committed to a bonehead maneuver, and see the motorbike at the last minute, not many of you realise that pushing this pedal will make you stop. Often, if you stop, it will avoid the accident. You don't have to run into us you know - your car will stop if instructed to do so. I think the problem is that in order to use the brakes, you also need to engage your eyes and your brain at the same time, and for most of you, that does seem to cause some trouble.

### Cellphone

Throw the fucking thing away. You can't drive on a good day. Now you're trying to drive while clamping a cellphone to your

ear and holding a conversation? I know I said the brain was multitasking, but you know that you can't do all this at the same time. Just throw it away. You're not that important, really - you aren't. And believe me, your phonecall isn't so important that you have to endanger everyone else on the road to take it.

### **"Sorry, I didn't see you"**

This is the phrase that your brain will be desperately trying to get you to say, when you realise that your eyes didn't see the motorbike you just hit because you didn't use your mirrors, brakes or indicators appropriately, and were having an unimportant, inconsequential conversation on your cellphone. You'll step out of the car and find the motorcyclist and you'll be so desperately wanting to say this phrase that you'll not be able to hold back. It's worth knowing that if you do utter these five words to an injured motorcyclist, you are likely to be punched and kicked and otherwise generally assaulted because these are not words that we like to hear. You say "sorry, I didn't see you". What we hear is "I'm a blind fucking moron and my brain doesn't work". These five words are only marginally less offensive than "Are you okay?"

### **Crash helmet**

This is not so much of a tip as a public information service. Now that you've run the motorcyclist down, and pissed him off by telling him you didn't see him, and asking if he's okay, your next course of action will typically be to try to take his crash helmet off. No, no no no no no no no no no a thousand times no. Use your brain. You just nearly killed the guy and now you want to remove the one item of protective gear that might be holding his head together after you swatted him with your Buick? Are you totally deranged? No - don't answer that. If you've got this far into the accident, we all know the answer. You're blind, and stupid. We don't need to add deranged to the list.

## TALES FROM THE BIKE SIDE

Every motorcyclist has their tale to tell. They're like fishing stories. They're exaggerated like fishing stories too, but reading between the lines gives you a good idea of what really happened. If you've got campfire tales of horror from your biking days, send them over. On then, to [Tales from the Bike Side.....](#)

### **The roundabout of doom. Part 1. Author : me**

My daily commute took me 60 miles each way. Twice a day I had to cross the roundabout in Bracknell, England, that is littered with traffic lights. On three of those occasions, the same woman in the same white Vauxhall, jumped the red lights coming on to a roundabout. Each time, she nearly collected me side-on. First time I avoided her completely. Second time I braked hard and managed to get around behind her. Third time I had to get the bike hard over and ended up on the grass verge trying to avoid her. I remember her numberplate letters - 'SFB'. Why? Stupid F\*cking Bitch. The fourth time, I managed to get her to stop. It seems she was under the impression that traffic on a roundabout should give way to traffic entering the roundabout. She also thought the red traffic lights only applied to the left lane (?). A Few weeks later, as I approached the roundabout, there was a traffic jam of major proportions. I weaved the bike through to the front to see what was going on. The traffic had been halted by a fleet of police cars. An air ambulance was parked on the rise in the middle of the roundabout. And there, peeking out from under the rear axle of an 18-wheeler, was the tail-end of a white Vauxhall. The "SFB" numberplate was clearly visible. The woman in question had obviously chosen the wrong target this time around. I watched in glee as she was strapped into the air ambulance. A casual discussion with one of the police motorcyclists on the scene revealed that she'd smashed her back and was unlikely to walk again. Sweet, sweet revenge.

Now I know on the face of it that sounds harsh - like I wanted her to die. I find it hard to carry a grudge against anyone, but put yourself in my shoes. The same woman came within inches of killing me on three separate occasions. Unless you've had your life threatened repeatedly like this, and by the same person, I accept that it's difficult for you to understand why I put the comments I did. Harsh? Yes. True? Yes.

### **The roundabout of doom. Part 2. Author : also me**

Another roundabout on my daily commute was the M25 anticlockwise junction at Leatherhead. I would come off the slip road, on to the roundabout and take the third exit - effectively straight across. One the day in question, the roundabout was clear. I came on, past the first exit, and as I approached the second exit, a woman in a rusty red Citroen tore on to the roundabout like her ass was on fire. Split second timing saw me flick the bike upright out of it's lean and slam side-on into her drivers side door, denting it with my left knee. The sudden stop unseated me from the bike and in an effort to maintain balance, I ended up with a hand on her windscreen, sprawled across the hood in front of her. A moment later, I was balanced again and I slowed down and pulled over. The stupid woman indicated, and turned off the roundabout heading towards the motorway - driving off! By this point it was too late to do anything about it - I couldn't give chase as I was a nervous wreck, so I collected the numberplate I'd knocked off her car, and continued my commute. At the first police station, I stopped to report the accident. I paraphrase, but the conversation went something like this:

Me : I'd like to report an accident.

Officer : Did you hit another vehicle or a pedestrian?

Me : no - some woman nearly killed me on the A244 roundabout. She jumped the traffic and didn't give way to me. I hit her car with the side of my bike, and my left knee, and by the time I'd re-balanced, she'd taken off down the motorway.

Officer : So you *did* hit a car?

Me : (nearly speechless) - erm. No. She hit me - she ran me off the road. She jumped the traffic and didn't give way.

Officer : I see. And do you have witnesses to this accident?

Me : It was rush hour on a motorway on-ramp - nobody stopped. But I got her number - literally. Her numberplate fell off.

Officer : I see. Well unfortunately, without witnesses, it will be your word against hers. If we find her.

Me : But I've got her damned numberplate. The red paint on my left knee and the huge dent in her door ought to be enough to figure out what happened!

Officer : be that as it may, we'd still have to find her first.

And this was the killer statement right here:

Officer : But we've got more important things to deal with than someone claiming to have had an accident. Frankly sir we don't have enough time or resources to deal with people like you. Now unless you can find where she lives, or get a credible witness, we really can't do anything for you.

At this point, I got into a very heated argument with him, telling him what I thought of their policies, and telling him that finding this idiot driver was not my job, but theirs. I pointed out that just because I rode a motorbike, I wasn't necessarily a criminal as he was implying, and I took his name and badge number to file an official complaint. I did this, and the response to the complaint was an unbelievable "it'll be your word against his, son, and he's a police officer", again inferring that I was the one at fault.

From that day on, the UK police have garnered zero respect from me. Wonder why....

## BEFORE

### Bike Links.

More will be added as I find ones worth being here (ie. not crap!). For now though:

[RideDrive UK advanced training](#) [Advanced motorcycle training UK](#) [Adventure Rider BMW Forums](#)



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### Links

All the links for relevant sites have now been moved to a dedicated links page which you can find [here](#).



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