

Opinion: Is road bike riding worth the risk?

By Aaron Gulley, Outside

The impact was as sudden and unexpected as lightning on a cloudless afternoon. One moment I was pedaling on a side road to my house after wrapping up a trail ride. The next I was 20 feet off the road on my back, tangled beneath my mountain bike in a stand of chamisa. People talk about their lives flashing before them in such moments, but for me there was only the sound of breaking glass and a searing pain in my left side as the car hit me from behind.

Short-circuited with adrenaline, I leapt from beneath my bike and sprinted down the roadway toward the scuffed and dented late-model Nissan, which was easing to a stop in the bike lane several hundred yards up the road. I gripped my phone—I don't remember pulling it from my thigh pocket—to get a photo of the car's license plate, and I was screaming as I ran: "You hit me! You f*%#ing hit me!" I now realize that, by saying those words aloud, I was trying to make sense of what had happened. To the driver's credit, despite my rage, he didn't flee.

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