

## Audio file

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## Transcript

Speaker 1

It's time for the outspoken cyclists. Your weekly conversation about bicycles, cyclists, trails, travel, advocacy, the bike industry, and much, much more. You can subscribe to our weekly podcast at [outspokencyclist.com](https://outspokencyclist.com) or through your favorite podcasting app to listen anytime. Now here's your host. Diane Jenks.

Speaker 2

Hello and welcome to the outspoken cyclist. I'm usually your host, Diane Jenks. Only this time the tables are turned on me. On my last show, I spoke with London Cycling advocate and the truly delightful Carla Francom. Not a moment after we ended our conversation, Carla sent me a note asking if she could interview me. Carla had many questions for me and I hope I didn't bend her ear too much. She asked me about my childhood, how I got into the bike business, and of course, about Brian. As we chatted, I made notes, so if you go to the outspoken cyclists website, you'll see links to some of the things we talked about there. As well as photos of our meadows and our beautiful mimosa tree that has just begun its annual show of amazing pink powder puff blossoms, there are also links to places and people I refer to in our conversation. I hope you enjoy it. We're doing another episode with Carla Franco and me, and she's turning the tables. And I wanted to know why. You want to do that?

Speaker 3

Ohh, good question. Well, when I spoke to you before, I just had so many questions for you. I wanted to know where you lived. I wanted to know what it like. What it looks like. I wanted to get an idea of your cycling and I was looking you up and there were so many interesting facts about you. And. And we were just stuck talking about boring old. Me. So I wanted to ask you questions and then I thought, well, maybe we could do it, you know, flip the tables, turn the tables and I could ask you questions. So you can you can be the star. How does that make you feel?

Speaker 2

Uh, it's only been done a couple of times. I used to have an engineer who worked with me when I was first on doing the podcast because we did a radio show every week and the podcast. Followed and he did that. I'm trying to remember. Ohh that was years and years ago. And then I was interviewed for her, her sports. And I think one other show.

So it makes me feel a little self-conscious. So it gets me to feel what other people might feel like, right.

Speaker 3

Yeah, but it's nice for you to have to be this. You know, you spend so much time thinking and talking to people, and that's so nice. And I just think it's nice, you know, for people to hear about you.

Speaker 2

I appreciate it. I appreciate it. So let's do it.

Speaker 3

Let's do it. Well. We are speaking, Diane Jenks, on World Bicycle Day 2024. Which is actually just a bit of luck, isn't it? Cause we arranged this day, but World Bicycle Day. I'm in London and you're in Ohio. Is that right? That's correct. Amazing. So here we are on World Bicycle Day and I just wanna start by asking you a bit about your life now and what what Ohio is like, where you live and just tell us a bit about where, where. You you are now in your life.

Speaker 2

So I am officially retired from a very long career in bicycle.

Speaker

Fail.

Speaker 3

Yeah. Which we're gonna go into.

Speaker 2

Yeah. And I would say semi retired because I get called back in to do things for my husband, who builds custom bikes and runs a a very busy service shop. So Ohio, which is. So where we are in Ohio, it's the northeast corner of the state and we really feel like we're more East Coast than West Coast or like Middle W We're not Midwest. Yeah. I live in a suburb, a ring suburb of Cleveland called South Euclid. And in spring, it's just one of the most beautiful places on Earth. It's a beautiful day. Today, flowers are blooming everywhere. Trees are in full leaf. It's just beautiful. It rained overnight. So now everything's kind of like happy. And the birds are singing. And it's really a beautiful time of year here. It could be really ugly. We head into. Winter. But this is a great place to be in spring and summer, yeah.

Speaker 3

Nice. Oh, we have 6. Ohh, it sounds lovely. Will you take some photos to add with the podcast? I'd love. To see some photos of what it looks.

Speaker 2

Sure. We have met. We put about four years ago, we turned most of our front yard into meadows. So they're in full bloom right now. One is full of flowers, the other is full of grasses and some flowers. And we, you know, we try to attract pollinators and and hummingbirds and bees and.

Speaker

Wow.

Speaker 2

Yeah.

Speaker 3

It sounds nice. And how is it that so are you, would you say you're in the suburbs? Is that right? Is it yeah. Suburbs of which town which? Cleveland.

Speaker 2

So we're in the suburbs of Cleveland, which is in the northeast of Ohio, and then Columbus is in the middle and Cincinnati's in the southwest. So if you drew a diagonal line in Cleveland from northeast to Southwest, you would hit the three major cities in Ohio.

Speaker 3

Right, got it. Got it. Interesting. My main memory about Ohio, my main association, is with Barack Obama in the election. I remember there was always a lot of stuff going on in Ohio during Barack Obama's election or even when he was trying to become the Democratic candidate.

Speaker 2

Yeah, that's because this is a very unfortunately part and and of course. This politically, this may be upsetting to some people. It's a very RedState, but we live in a very blue county. So Cleveland is very blue. And and that's one of the reasons we're here.

Speaker 3

Ohh very nice. And how is it for cycling? Well, it's.

Speaker 2

Getting better. There are some things that. Are just fabulous. We have the Ohio and Erie Canal towpath just maybe 15 miles from our house and it it's, I think the whole thing is

like 330 miles, but there is. It goes into downtown Cleveland. It goes S towards Akron and then into other areas of Ohio. You know, we have lots of paved trails. We have lots of off road type trails, but the actual infrastructure in the city, it's coming along, but it's very disconnected. Right now, there aren't a lot of connected ways of getting around. If you want to get around in the city.

Speaker 3

Yeah, so that needs work.

Speaker 2

Yeah. And it's getting it. It's getting it. We have a great organization called Bike. Cleveland and a great executive director of that organization, Jake Jacob Van Sickle, has just done a phenomenal job in the last five to seven years, I'd say.

Speaker 3

That's amazing. Well, that's really here and it's a connection, isn't it? So, Waltham Forest, which is an area of London, has really good connected cycle routes. I went there recently and it's just amazing when you can just go and go and go. And you're like, I'm still going. I'm not having to drag my bike onto the curb and walk it across the junction.

Speaker 2

Yeah, it is amazing.

Speaker 3

Because it's too dangerous. You know, you're just crack. Come on, brilliant. And and I must.

Speaker 2

Yeah, that's that's nice. I I wish we had more of that here and when you and I spoke last time, you talked about how the congestion free Central London allowed you to ride a lot. We don't have that here in New York started June 1st, congestion pricing and we'll see how they do.

Speaker 3

Ohh and now I have a confession to make, which is I'm an American citizen, which I didn't tell you last time. I don't. Think I was actually.

Speaker 2

No, you did not.

Speaker 3

Well, yeah, I've got an American passport, so I must come and visit. And I was born in New York. I was born in Long Island in 1978. My dad was a university lecturer and he and my mum moved out here for a year they did like an apartment. Swap spent a lot of time in Jones Beach and. So I had a passport photo done when I was three months old, sat on about 18 Yellow Pages. Back in the day so and I've got a lot of family in America and in New York, both of. My brothers live in the states. Sense.

Speaker 2

Wow. So you didn't mention that when we spoke last time? Well, I'm so happy to hear that. So maybe you'll come and visit that. We would. Love that. Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 3

That would be great. That would be great. And I want to go back to so. Ohh yes. I wanted to ask you. So I'm just going through my questions now. I wanted to ask you, when did your love of the bicycle start? Where did you do you remember the first time you got? On a bike, where were you?

Speaker 2

Ohh sure I was a really little girl. My my father helped me to learn to ride and his admonition was do not leave the driveway. And of course, I peddled down the driveway and fell over and skinned both of my knees. And he's like, see, I told you so. That's my earliest memory of my father telling me don't leave the driveway.

Speaker 3

Yeah, you got back on there. You got back on after having your knee skin with shirt.

Speaker

But I think.

Speaker 2

Oh, absolutely. When I was a kid, I wrote everywhere. In fact, I had a Siamese cat and I used to put her on my shoulder and ride around where I ride around. And that went on for a long, long time. And then of course, I got a driver's license when I was 16, and I I didn't get back to the bike until I was an adult.

Speaker

That's amazing.

Speaker 2

And it it wasn't about loving riding as much as it was about loving the actual machine and the and the business, I really loved the bicycle business and it it's a pretty crazy thing to love because the Business Today is so awful right now and is so struggling it is

struggling here in the states. I think it's struggling. Somewhat worldwide with what happened with the. Demick. But I still love it. You know, I my husband builds these beautiful machines and they just, they just make my my little heart go pitter Pat. I love.

Speaker 3

That's amazing. We'll see. So if I just said that. So I was when I cycled 100 miles last weekend. And yes, I'm happy to make that boast. I was just thinking this little machine I'm on. It's so light. This machine. It's so light and I'm pedaling and it's getting me. So I mean, it is an incredible machine. And we'll get on to that. But back to you when the when you were growing up, then where did you grow up when you were cycling when you had the sign these cat on your shoulder.

Speaker 2

Them. They're beautiful. In Cincinnati that I grew up in Cincinnati, so I was born in Philadelphia.

Speaker

Yeah.

Speaker 2

And we moved to Cincinnati when I was six, I think 5 or 6. My mother, my grandmother, my mother was born and raised in Cincinnati. My father in Philadelphia. They met during the war. He had been drafted, and she was a Lieutenant in the Women's Army Corps and was sent to Philadelphia for something. And I never really learned.

Speaker

What else?

Speaker 2

What that was about, but when? And. That my family sort of dispersed from Philadelphia, my uncle and his kids and wife went to California, and my mom and dad and I went to Cincinnati. And I wish I'd gone to California. But I grew up in Cincinnati.

Speaker 3

And did you cycle everywhere as a kid was? It something you on all the time.

Speaker 2

I did. I did during the Nice season I did. I had, I had a three speed bicycle like a A. Yeah, I think I call it.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

I think they called it a Phillips then, but it was like the thing to have was a lolly, a British Wally 3 speed. That was the cool bike in British racing green, you know.

Speaker 3

Yeah, yeah. And did you have that one then you have that bike?

Speaker 2

No, I think my bike was brown actually. But it was still I. Loved it. It was a great bike, yeah.

Speaker

Was.

Speaker 3

There, isn't it. I remember getting a BMX when I was 7 and it was red and yellow hammer and it was and I was on it the whole. Time but. My best friend was she could not hide her jealousy, but she had a chopper that was brilliant that she got from a French supermarket. So like, yeah, the the bike you have at that age. Is quite important, isn't it? That's the.

Speaker 2

It is.

Speaker 3

So and then I was reading that you got your, you had your first bike shop, an independent bike shop in 1974.

Speaker 2

That's correct.

Speaker 3

What was the shop called and where was?

Speaker 2

It was called LBS and if you asked me what LBS stands for, I'll tell you a lot of people say oh, local bike shop or little bike shop, it just meant a lot of \*\*\*\*\*. And that's what we used to tell people it was on the West side of Cleveland. Now we. Cleveland is one of those weird cities. There's a a river called the Cuyahoga River, which means Crooked River. And it runs down. Through downtown Cleveland and into Lake Erie and then it north and then it runs S well, the West side of the river was pretty much a blue collar working part of the of the city. And then the east side is where all of the the like, the

orchestra and the museums. And the universities and the professors and doctors, and they all lived on the east side. So it was kind of this divided city. It still is in a lot of ways. But the shop was on the near West side, near the Cleveland Metro Park Zoo. It was right around the corner from the zoo.

Speaker

And.

Speaker 2

And my first really nice bike frame that I that made me fall in love with the idea of high end Pro Cycling was a serrata. 23 inch. Sort of a burgundy colored touring frame and the frame came into the shop. I didn't own the shop at the time I was. Working there and this. This frame came into the shop and I took one look at it and I'm like. This is like a piece of art. Right. Looks like a piece of art, and that was the beginning. And then eventually we moved to a something a little closer to the highway and that shop closed in 1980. Let's see 1989 maybe and then opened a shop in downtown Cleveland.

Speaker

Uh-huh. Uh, huh.

Speaker 2

Beautiful space. Oh my goodness. We rehab. Dubbed 1923 warehouse building that had 10 ceilings, diagonal wood floors this grand staircase that went upstairs and because it was a historic building you had to follow the architectural rules. Yeah, it was restored. And it was beautiful. But downtown Cleveland was never bustling. It still isn't bustling. People don't. They're starting to live there. But we were, like, 25 years ahead of our time.

Speaker 3

Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 2

And we ended up selling that shop and I retired for a year and wrote a book.

Speaker 3

Wow. And what? And what was? Well, hang on. I was. I think what we'll come to the book. But I wanted to ask you about this time in 1974 cause I've got this image of you in a bike shop when interesting time back then. I was just thinking was it around the time of what was going on in the world?

Speaker

OK.

Speaker 3

That point you remember this.

Speaker 2

And that's a that's a really good question. So of course it was post Vietnam. Hmm. And the person I was working with had been in the had actually been drafted and then got out for a a medical issue. And at the time I was a single mom. I had a 2. You're old, yeah. And I needed a job and went to work in the bike shop and. That's how I got that job.

Speaker 3

And were you? Oh, that's so interesting. Oh, you were flair wearer. Did you wear? What did you wear? Did you listen to?

Speaker 2

Jeans and AT shirt. So this is this I think is probably one of the more interesting things about my life. My mother owned a women's ready to wear store of high end exclusive expensive women's clothing for like evening wear and. Professional wear like women's suits and. And I wore jeans and T-shirts literally from the time I was 14, and she hated it. She just couldn't understand why I didn't like all this beautiful. And I'm like, look around you. I don't like it. So, yeah, I was kind of the hippie dippie kid, you know, and that is what was going on, you know.

Speaker 3

That's funny.

Speaker 2

I came through the 60s and the 70s and and things are changing really, really fast.

Speaker 3

Umm. And you must have had a good playlist. Then I'm thinking you had Jimi Hendrix on the you would have. Had a good playlist in.

Speaker 2

The bike shop I imagine. Ohh yeah, we had. Yeah, it was a rock'n'roll. It was a rock'n'roll. So absolutely. And you know, in in those days we were going to concerts where the the tickets weren't \$500, you know, they were cheap. You could see people like Jethro Tull and and Steve Winwood. And, you know, all of the great British bands. Yeah. But they we wanted to see.

Speaker

Yeah. Yes.

Speaker 2

Yeah. Although I I was. A big Frank Zappa fan. I'm still a big Frank Zappa fan. Yeah. Yeah, he was brilliant.

Speaker 3

Over here. Oh, oh, I've. I have to listen. I actually went. My auntie took me to Woodstock. The area of Woodstock about, you know, probably 20, you know, 20-30 years ago, I was really young and there were. People still there and.

Speaker

Oh yeah.

Speaker 3

You know, people just stayed. It's the amazing. Yeah, we.

Speaker 2

We actually delivered a bike to a couple a a tandem to a couple who lives in Woodstock. So I I was there not too long and my husband's from New York, so we've. Been all through that area, yeah. Let's take a short break so we can catch our breath and we'll be back in a flash. You're listening to the outspoken cyclist. We are back on the outspoken cyclist. I'm Diane Jenks, but today's host is Carla Francom, and she is asking the questions.

Speaker 3

And so at what point, because now you have two dogs and you're married to Brian, who has a bike shop. Did you what? What point did you meet Brian in in your bike shops? And was it in a bike shop or how did?

Speaker 2

This all happen, so I told you that I semi retired and stayed home. And wrote a book.

Speaker 3

What was the book you were writing?

Speaker 2

One of the specialties of my shop. Was getting people ready to take a bike tour right? Like an organized tour like back Roads or Vermont bike tours or ride and seek tours. And so the shop that we head downtown, I ran a lot of events over the years I've I've run a half, meaning I've produced a lot of events. Over the years.

Speaker 3

I saw this one.

Speaker 2

I produced 1/2 Ironman for three years. I produced some biathlons. I produced a one day tour of our beautiful metro parks. And then I got people ready for tours. All over the World by outfitting them and and helping them choose things like what's the right ring we or how many pairs of shorts should you take? How many pairs of socks and and so once a year we had something called a touring open house and I'd invite 6 or 7 tour Operators to come to the shop. I'd invite others to send literature and we would have a weekend of these tour operators presenting their information and people coming through the shop just picking up literature. And so one evening we had the tour operators over to the to the house. To talk about what we we're having dinner and I'm. Like so what's what's the? Hardest thing as a tour operator and they said getting people to read. The departure guide that we send and they always come and they just don't know anything and I'm like, well, how is it possible, you know, you want to go on this ride, this this seven day or five day or whatever it is and you don't know anything.

Speaker 3

Hmm.

Speaker 2

They said we. You know, they said all these different things. So that's what I wrote the book about the hubbub. God, discipling.

Speaker 3

Ohh very good, very good. And I've gotta say, while we're on this subject, I mean, there is, I I'm doing this big ride in August. There's so much background stuff that. Needs to happen, you know. Like you know, you've. Gotta work out what the and I've got this thing at the moment where I did the 100 mile cycle, but I've then developed a bit of a. Knee injury, which I'll. Get sorted, but because I I'm not quite in the right position and so I need to do loads of exercises to get the neat, but there's all these other things that need to happen, you know? And like you said, the packing, getting the right bike, it's not even just training. It's a lot. Of work, isn't it to do a?

Speaker 2

Trick. Wait. Yeah. And and then people get frightened that they're not gonna be able to do it. So there there's a whole chapter explaining that all you have to do is get out and ride 10 miles.

Speaker

Yes.

Speaker 2

If you can ride 10 miles, you can ride 40. Right. You. You stop. Yeah. You have something to eat. You take a break, you get back on. So yeah, I I I feel like taking a bike tour is probably the best vacation there is.

Speaker 3

Ohh I do agree on that. Yeah, it's the best. I couldn't do lying on. Some, yeah, the beach.

Speaker 2

We want to. Do a boat bike tour. We would love to go to the Netherlands and grab a boat, get on a boat. And then in the evening, you have your dinner and you get wherever you're going, and the next day you get out and. You ride and you get back. On the boat you go, doesn't that?

Speaker 3

Ohh, amazing. Sound wonderful? Yes, because every day you wake up in a different place as well, right? Which is great, which is so exciting. So yeah.

Speaker 2

Right, right, right. And about 2/3 of the way through, finishing up the book. I realized that. The book meant nothing to me without the interaction of the customers. I loved retail and I loved working. I started working in a in a department store, even while my mom had her store. I didn't work for her very much, but when I was 15, I lied to get a job in a department store.

Speaker

Yeah.

Speaker 2

You know, I loved retail. I sort of, I think in your bones, if you love it, you love it. And I started looking for a space because I had never had a shop exactly the way I wanted it. Somebody else always held the reins of the of the.

Speaker

And. Right.

Speaker 2

And so I wanted a shop that basically did not sell production bikes. I didn't want to be tied to bike inventory. I wanted to sell apparel and shoes and helmets and parts and build custom bikes. Right. So I opened a small shop in a suburb called Cleveland Heights and that's where we lived at the time I it was within. It had to be within walking distance. Of my house.

Speaker 3

Mm-hmm.

Speaker 2

And at the time that was so, and the person who was my head mechanic for a long time went with me for the 1st. Like 8 months and then decided he was offered a job in his other field which was biomedical engineering.

Speaker

Hmm.

Speaker 2

And he took that job and sort of left me high and dry because I didn't do the mechanical work. You know, I was the bike fitter, and I was the I was everything else. But the mechanical stuff and the design and the building. And I didn't build wheels and. And we built a lot of wheels. So we there was an there is an organization called the National Bicycle Dealers Association. I was a member and they put out a newsletter every month. And in those days nothing was on the Internet. We're talking back in 1997.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

Yeah. And so I sent out a like a help wanted. Yeah, in in the news. This letter, and it was very specific. It had to be somebody who was interested in Rd. bikes and at that time mountain biking was huge. So a lot of the young mechanics or even any mechanics were working on mountain bikes and didn't really have the the knowledge of the old companio and the old Shimano and the old Sun Tour. And the all all of that. And they had to be a wheel builder and they had to have some sort of engineering background.

Speaker

Uh.

Speaker 2

The only resume I got was from Brian.

Speaker 3

This is so romantic. I love you.

Speaker 2

It was romantic, and so he lived way upstate in New York, had been working in a bike shop for five. Years. There's a. Huge age difference between the two of us. I have to tell

you that right from the the get go and a lot of people know that and we used to keep it. Fairly low key, but anymore we don't care. We've been together almost 28 years so. He his resume was absolutely spot on. Mm-hmm. So I called him because in those days, I don't know if I called him or I emailed him and we had a phone conversation. MHM. And I this was in December and I invited him to come and spend 2 days in the bike shop and I put together some jobs for him to do, you know, some work for him and yeah. Then, and we spent the two days together, and we were just a great match. Yeah, I called. I made him an offer. He went back home. And I I think it was Christmas Day or the day after. The. Day called me up and accepted the offer, and in January he moved here at the end of January and. We started working in 1998. We started riding a tandem together that spring. And that was. The rest is history.

Speaker 3

The rest is history, and you say if there was an age difference. And so who was older? Who was younger?

Speaker 2

Ohh, I'm much older than him.

Speaker 3

Right. Oh, interesting. Oh.

Speaker 2

Although he's like an old man in a young body, because he's just, he's a very thoughtful, wise, intelligent. He is an A rabid leader and studier and. No.

Speaker

Hmm.

Speaker 2

On almost any topic, but especially things like engineering and physics and electrical stuff, and you know, whatever.

Speaker 3

And So what I love about the story with you and Brian is that if you hadn't needed this very specific person in your shop, you wouldn't have met him because he didn't even live for you. And that's why he met him and. And so that's. And also what what seems is that you were so you you needed to find out you were compatible from a work point of view which you were and then you rode together on a bike. And so this is the story of compatibility. From what I could see, which is.

Speaker 2

Lovely. We were extremely compatible in the shop for quite a while. I mean, we became we still are not as much because it's been well, it's been 12 years since we shut down our big store. We're a big store that both did bicycles.

Speaker 3

Right.

Speaker 2

And coffee.

Speaker 3

Ohh nice. What was that store called?

Speaker 2

It's still called hubbub.

Speaker 3

OK, so it still going right, right.

Speaker 2

Right, the the coffee shop was called High Peaks coffee, kind of honoring where Brian was from and the high peaks of the Adirondacks. But the coffee shop was not a good idea for us at the time. The location wasn't. There were a lot of things that happened with that. And I was, I was teaching yoga, so there was a there was a yoga studio built in, too. And that did well. And yoga has done well. And when we shut that shop down, Brian sort of went into seclusion and took his core customers to a.

Speaker

Wow.

Speaker 2

That's sort of an industrial space. Yeah. And then I opened a small yoga studio and sort of halfway in between where we live and where his shop was. And then he recently the a year and a half ago, moved back to a location we really had wanted to go to 25 years ago. And in those days.

Speaker 3

Right.

Speaker 2

They did not want retail in that area and now they don't mind. So yeah, he's where he wants to be and he's getting really, really busy. So it looks like I'm going back to work.

Speaker 3

So get a quick hug. What? What's it called? Where he's working. Now then, what's?

Speaker 2

Yes, we put his name at the shop.

Speaker 3

It ohh so he's out. Right. He's back up. Right. See, when you said. Going back right, OK, lovely.

Speaker 2

Yeah, I mean, there was no reason to kill the brand, you know.

Speaker 3

Yes, I see. Brian, hop up in Cleveland is that.

Speaker 2

Right. It's well, he's in a suburb called Beechwood, which is an east. It's it's, you know, in a really convenient location for his core customer.

Speaker

But.

Speaker 3

Yeah, yeah, fantastic. OK, come and visit. And you've got. Well, I mean, I just feel like you're an early adopter. You know, yoga back in the day, although I guess it was popular. And then the podcast.

Speaker 2

Let me tell you my yoga story real quick.

Speaker 3

Go on. Don't, please. Yeah.

Speaker 2

So in 1999, my mom was really, really sick and she was in her 80s and was told just get up and walk. She had emphysema just so get up out of your chair, walk to the door. Get up. I do your chair walk to the door. Walk to the sidewalk, go down. But and she decided she had nothing. To live for.

Speaker

Oh.

Speaker 2

That was her choice. She was living with my sister at the time in a town South of here. Yeah, 65 miles South of here. And we had brought her back from California, which where? She and my dad had lived for many.

Speaker

Right.

Speaker 2

Years. And. When she died. I was really. Disturbed by the fact that she chose that when she could have had more healthy years. Had she just done something, you know, now I was active. I was a runner and then I was. I'm a cyclist and you know I do all kinds of stuff. So Brian said to me, you know, you took yoga. Yeah. Back when you were in your 30s, he says. I think you should get back into it. Yeah. And he bought me a mat and a block and a strap and said, go take yoga classes.

Speaker

Oh.

Speaker 2

And I did in nine, and that would have been in 2000 and in 2002 I was certified as a, as a yoga instructor. I went to a yoga teacher, training a long one.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

Yeah, and so I've. Been teaching ever since I celebrated 20 years in. 2022.

Speaker 3

Wow, you have had. A rich life, haven't you a rich and?

Speaker 2

It's been interesting. Yeah. You know, I look back on it and I'm like, I don't know what I have to what I've contributed, but I've got a I've done a whole \*\*\*\* load of stuff, you know?

Speaker 3

2nd. I bet you that it's gonna. I reckon there must be so many people who who have events that have gone on, events that you've organised or you've fixed up their, you know, their bike up there must be hundreds, probably thousands of people like.

Speaker 2

That's true. That's true. And and you know what the events were so satisfying. A lot of people sponsor riders. And want their riders to race their bikes, but I wanted venue so that everybody could come and just ride and have a good time. And so all of almost all of the events I did, a couple of competitive events, of course the triathlon was competitive and the biathlons were, but for the most part, all my rides were just. Slides, you know.

Speaker 3

Right, fantastic. I'm just enjoying.

Speaker 2

With lots of food.

Speaker 3

Yes, the joy people have experienced, I made a new friend last week. You know, that's fantastic.

Speaker 2

Hey. Carla and I are going to take one last break before wrapping up our conversation. You're listening to the outspoken cyclist. And we're back to wrap up what has been a delightful episode of the show. Carla has been a great interviewer, and I've tried to be a dutiful interviewee.

Speaker 3

There we go. He got a Bush.

Speaker

Is it a?

Speaker 3

Bushnell tandem is that the right way? To say it.

Speaker 2

Push now, yeah.

Speaker 3

No. And was that always easy or? Was that cause? I tried to tantrum once I. Found it very tricky.

Speaker 2

So. So. I again, I wasn't much of A rider before I I met Brian. You know, I mean, I could sell the bikes and I knew what I was talking about because I had the experience of all my customers. Feedback number one. And when you have thousands of people coming in and out and talking to you, you get the if you're, if you're attentive, you can figure out certain things.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

We sold somebody a tandem. We didn't have it in stock. We had to order it. I don't even remember who they were. I kind of vaguely remember that that might be the couple. This this one couple had asked us for a tandem, brought it in and they wrote it and they left and Brian said I think we should carry more tandems. Umm, so we ordered. Burly, burly tandems were these medium priced tandems at the time they were affordable. They were they were heavy, but they were fun. They were still high, fairly high quality. I mean, they certainly weren't custom, but it didn't matter. Tandems are a really different market, but then you also had couples. So that was kind of fun. So Brian said if we're going to sell tandems, you need to learn. The ride? Uh, uh oh, so he put me on the back of of a tandem and we rode down the street and I was terrified.

Speaker 3

Right.

Speaker 2

We came back and he said OK, that was pretty good. You know, it was like 10 minutes, 15 minutes and the next day he said let's try this again. And this time we went around the block.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

And I'm. Yeah, maybe not so bad. So he said. All right, now we're going to go take an 8 mile or nine mile. Whatever. It was wide. Yeah. And he took me down to a. Place that it's. Called River Rd. here where everybody rides. And we rode about 8 miles and we came back and that was it. I was hooked. I fell in love with it. Yeah. And we rode that first year. Our commitment was to ride 1000 miles.

Speaker 3

Yeah. Really.

Speaker

Why? Wow.

Speaker 2

On the tandem? So we get to December. And it's I think the week before Christmas and it's cold and it's steady and it's like, oh, my God. But we have because we were bike shop, we had all these. Clothes. So we knew how. To dress. Yeah. And we rode. I think we needed it. We had like 970 miles or 75 something if we needed, like, 25 miles. So we went down to one of the metro parks. We like to ride and it's fairly.

Speaker

Back.

Speaker 2

We just hauled that. So we came back and we had like a mile to go. So we were, like, rode around the parking lot until it turned 1000 miles the next week it was 75° and sunny and you could. Wear. We waited one more week.

Speaker 3

You were like, we couldn't get it all out.

Speaker 2

The freeze, but we we got the 1000 miles.

Speaker 3

I love it. I I love it. You're. Going on around the park car park. In the freezing just to.

Speaker 2

Yeah, exactly, exactly.

Speaker 3

Get that's good. I love it though there. A lot of. Stories someone was telling me in December, they were like, I've got so many a, you know, I've got so many targets I've got my year target, my month target. My week? Yeah, it's crazy targets and.

Speaker 2

They gave that up a long time ago. I mean, one year we had we needed to do 1500 miles so we could do RAGBRAI on and we actually shut the shop down for for 10 days to do rag ride. We went out to Iowa and we rode with eight thousand of our best friends who we didn't.

Speaker 3

Right. Yeah.

Speaker 2

And it was a blast, but it was very, very, very challenging.

Speaker 3

Is that race across America right? Right.

Speaker 2

No, that's ragbag goes from western to eastern Iowa. It's a one trip. So you drive to the West and you come back to east and then you come home. No race across America is going to launch June 11th, and that's a.

Speaker 3

Right.

Speaker 2

4000 mile.

Speaker

Wow.

Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah, that's they'll be a blind guy on a tandem.

Speaker 3

For that, that. Is wow. I heard. I heard you. Yeah.

Speaker 2

Yeah, that was on the show with you.

Speaker 3

Fantastic. So interesting. I need to listen to the rest of it. But I love the. Bit about his family. So interesting. So you've got the tandem with Brian, but do you have other bikes for different cause? I've got like, you know, my road bike. I've now got the bike that I can lock. Up to lampposts. In. The street right got. Have you got kind of? Various ones.

Speaker 2

So I do not. I did. I had a single. I rarely wrote it and I don't ride a single at all anymore. Brian has a collection to die for beautiful bikes. And in fact, if you go on hit our website [hubbub dot bike](http://hubbubdotbike.com).

Speaker

Yeah.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

And read the. Be careful what you wish for. Story. Yeah. It's just a remarkable story of a bike that I sold in 1991, the same year that he rode that brand in New York. And that's you have to read the story. It's just one of those serendipitous.

Speaker 3

Uh.

Speaker 2

Crazy stories and that bike is now hanging in his shop he he rides. Custom Waterford so Waterford was our builder for a while but he also builds his own frames. He's just never gotten around to building 1 for himself, right? He should. He probably will. But yeah, the Bushnell, which is what we were going to talk about is not our first tandem. Our first tandem was a burly.

Speaker

Right, right. Yeah.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

Then we had a a coupled commotion built for us.

Speaker

Yeah.

Speaker 2

And we took that to Palm Springs and did a tandem tour early on.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

We sold that bike because it just wasn't exactly what we wanted, and the fit wasn't perfect. Fitting a tandem is a little different than fitting a single for a while, we rode a commotion soft ride, so it had a soft ride beam on the.

Speaker 3

Right.

Speaker

Right and.

Speaker 2

Back and that's kind of fun. And then we got a Calfee carbon bike that was just fabulous. It was a rocket ship. But in super light. But it was only a an out and back bike. You couldn't really take it anywhere. So he designed a new tandem to be an urban assault vehicle.

Speaker 3

Right. Hmm.

Speaker 2

Something we could take anywhere and everywhere that he could put any kind of wheels and that would have so one pair of wheels.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

As a A A Dynamo hub in it, so we always have weights and it we just had couplers put in it we didn't originally but it was built like by a guy named Bushnell out in at R&E cycles in Seattle. He was we think the last bike he actually built are and he's still building bikes. But Bush Mr. Bushnell.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

It's not around doing that now. And we've had that bike now. Wow, I'd say 10 or 12 years. We love it. It's we just were on it a couple day a few days ago. And remarkably it's just.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

The perfect bike for us. We've had it in the Middle East. We took it to Israel for a week. Yeah, that was a trip going, going up a mountain in 104 degree heat in the desert. That

was, yeah. When we thought maybe we really need a motor. We need an E bike for that.

Speaker

Wow.

Speaker 3

Yeah. Well. Yeah.

Speaker 2

But so we have a. A whole he has a whole bunch of bikes, but our bike is a tandem.

Speaker 3

That's so good. I mean, I gotta say, just you know, I before I perhaps didn't quite understand the importance of being able to have a bike built, but I'm getting the bike built for me at the moment because. You know I need. I need a bike for for this alts ride, but I need it to be light and a road bike but I can't get over to get over like for you know, to hook the brakes so I need a flat handlebar but then I need big gears and you know. Once you start needing all this stuff.

Speaker 2

You can always do drop bars with the right fit. That's. That's just my opinion, which is opinionated, but since.

Speaker 3

OK, that you took right.

Speaker 2

I put thousands.

Speaker 3

We don't have to talk to my lady. I love that I've got a lady bike fitter here in London. Kate Corden, who is excellent. And so I'll leave you to thrasher out. In fact, funny enough, I mentioned my bike fitter the other day and I I just mentioned my bike fitter and they said what did? He and I was like, no, she she, she. Hey. So very good. But yeah, no, we're getting it all sorted, but actually we found a lovely beautiful light frame in a flat handlebars and blah blah blah. So anyway. It's all being built. As we so it's all under control but but also this podcast you've been running the out out soil, the outspoken podcast that you've been running is one of the longest running and most popular bicycling podcast in the industry. Over 640 episodes with almost 3000 interviews and spanning over 30 years. Which is really something. And you told me you have seven to

10,000. Downloads a month, which is incredible. And first of all I wanted to ask you, I think you set it up in 2010, is that right?

Speaker 2

September. It was, yeah, 2010. Because you know who my first guest was? The guy who built that very first frame that I loved in 1974. Ben serrata.

Speaker

Must have.

Speaker 3

Hmm.

Speaker

Oh.

Speaker 3

Ohh that's so. Sweet.

Speaker 2

That was the goal, to start with him.

Speaker 3

Oh, that frame that got you. That was a piece of art. Did you tell him it was a piece of art?

Speaker 2

He knows, yeah.

Speaker 3

You know you're no longer.

Speaker 2

He's still offering bikes, but he's no longer, you know, holding the torch. He should. He was real. Pretty good.

Speaker

Ohh.

Speaker 3

And cause I was gonna ask you in 2010 you were you one of the first podcast, was there a lot of podcasts around then or was that?

Speaker 2

No, no. So the way it really started was a guy came into the shop. And he said he knew us, but I didn't recognize him. He had probably done one of our events. I mean, when you have hundreds of people on an event, you might know everybody. And then again.

Speaker

Hmm.

Speaker 2

You might not. Yeah. And he said that he worked for Clear Channel, which was an organization that owned radio stations all over the country.

Speaker

Hmm.

Speaker 2

And this one was in Youngstown, and it was an AM shock jock station. So you they did, you know, baseball, football, basketball, all kinds of sports didn't know anything about bicycling except this guy who was a salesman for the company. Hmm. Was a cyclist. And he had gone to his boss and said I think we should do a bicycle show once a week. And he came to us and he came to me and said, I want to do this bicycle show called bicycling.

Speaker

Here.

Speaker 2

A. And I want you to be the host. I'm like, I don't know anything about radio, he said. It's not a big deal, however you want to do it. It's fine, I thought. Well, the only way to do it is an interview format, right? We'll just get somebody cool on the show and blah, blah, blah and they paired me with the guy who is a radio professional. I mean, he'd been around a long time. He knew nothing about bicycles, but he knew everything about radio and he was just a great sort of. Foil for me, he was great to have there and he was funny and he was smart. So for 21 weeks, every Monday I would drive to Youngstown, which was 75 miles away. Yeah. Do my show on the radio and drive back. And they turned that into a podcast.

Speaker 3

Oh. Ohh I see.

Speaker 2

At the end of 21 weeks, it was going to be winter and I'm like, you know what, I'm not driving to Youngstown in the winter, not doing that. And it was a schlep.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

At the same time, one of our older customers who worked for he's actually an IT guy, but he for many, many years had volunteered at a local college, actually a university radio station. And he had his own show and he was an A radio engineer. And he had come into the shop and he said. He knew that the that the show was going off the air and he said to me. Why don't you come to John Carroll University and do your show there? Umm, I'm like OK, here's the cool thing. John Carroll University. I could actually if I had to walk to there from my house.

Speaker 3

Right.

Speaker 2

Yeah, 10 minutes away in the cars. Yeah. So I met with the station manager, who, it turns out I knew and had sold the bike two years before, and we set it up and at the end of every. Broadcast and and radios are really, you know, communications. So radio is a really cool thing because it's finite. I had between 59 and 60 minutes to get it. Right. Yeah. And you can't go over and you can't go under. That's your time slot. Yeah. So I got really, really good at. Planning my show, getting my guests and and this guy was my engineer and he was my on on air partner for about 6 years.

Speaker 3

Right. OK, good.

Speaker 2

And then he said, I'm done. I don't want to do this anymore. So I did it for a while. We moved it down to 1/2 hour and eventually we just let the radio show go. And I continued the podcast on my own. He taught me how to do editing. And so I do it all myself now we. But. He or my husband came up with the name outspoken cyclist. I'm like, yeah, that sounds OK. I probably would have picked something else if I had more time and really cared enough, but it's turned out to be a good name.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

And.

Speaker 3

I like it. Yeah, I think it's we need to be outspoken, don't we? We need to be outspoken.

Speaker 2

Yeah, I mean.

Speaker 3

To get out.

Speaker 2

We do and it's so it was 13 years last September.

Speaker 3

Well, and the reason I ask is one of my friends is called Helen Zaltzman and she has a podcast called The Illusionist, but she was one of the first people because her husband is a sound man and an engineer. So he had all the equipment at home and he's known as Martin, the sound man on the podcast. And so she just had the ability to be one of the first because she had the equipment. I was interested and so it sounds like. I could see. How it worked for you and also. It's you've. You've what? You've had all your life by the sounds of it is exercise bikes and people and stories and talking.

Speaker 2

It's all that's all true, and one of the things that it that has made it so much easier is zoom. Nothing. I mean, it was remarkable when I figured out that I could have zoom with you on one track.

Speaker

Right.

Speaker 2

And me on another it made editing so much easier. I didn't have to go to the radio station and use their equipment, which the college students screw it up every time they go into the into the studio to record. Yeah. So I never got the hang of their soundboard, and I don't even need a soundboard. You know, I have a really high quality mic, and I have my computer, and I think the sound is pretty good on the podcasts.

Speaker 3

It's really good and I think you do a. Great job. On it. Thanks. So because you've had a really interesting life, I want to ask you some more general questions. What would you

say if you had, say a 20 something listening about about cycling but about life? What do you think, what lessons have you learned? Would you say over the years?

Speaker 2

Oh.

Speaker 3

I'm just throwing. You we can have a pause if you want to. Think.

Speaker 2

About it, no, it's rephrase. It say it differently. Let me hear it in a different what are what are you asking me?

Speaker 3

OK, so I'm asking you, I guess what lessons, what lessons have you learned over your life in terms of what do you think's important and what would you say to say if there was someone who was 20 and on confident stress, wondering, you know, what business path to take, what life to take? What advice would you have for them about kind of living their life, really and going for it? And you know, be confident or don't sweat the small stuff or what do you think you've learned? What would you tell your, you know, your 2020 year old self or or a 20 year old that walked into the shop that was, you know, trying to find their way.

Speaker 2

Such an interesting question A&B that you ask it today because it's not as if I haven't been thinking about some of that in the last couple of days. A really, really, really good friend of mine just came back from a three day retreat at a monastery, and I've done lots of seminars over the years about.

Speaker

Yeah.

Speaker 2

For taking care of the, you know my languaging and how I think about things and and I've read a lot of you know kind of out there books like all of the Richard Buck books and Shirley MacLaine books and Carlos Castaneda books. And yet I've also read a lot of biographies, autobiographies. I don't read much fiction.

Speaker

Hmm.

Speaker 2

So I would say. Two of the most important things one is. To take some time every day. To just clear your mind and just listen.

Speaker

And.

Speaker 2

To what's going on around you, stop talking and listen and and it's hard. It's really difficult if if you feel like you need to fill every moment with noise like.

Speaker

And.

Speaker 2

This House, when Brian leaves for work. This house is usually quiet for several hours a day. Nothing. No talking. I don't even talk to my dogs. You know, if they're sleeping, I leave them alone and.

Speaker 3

Uh.

Speaker

Just.

Speaker 2

Kind of move through the day being present and what you realize is all the \*\*\*\* you're dragging with you from when you were, you know, five years old, six years old, two years old, ten years old, 15.

Speaker 3

Yes.

Speaker 2

Doesn't matter at all. And whatever's gonna happen is gonna happen here. Enjoy the time you have now. I'm. You know, I'm really at a stage in my life I'm old compared to a lot of people. I'm much older than most people think I am. And. Part of that. I think it's genetics that people don't realize how old I am and that I have. I have knock on wood, decent genes, but I think more so it's an attitude, you know, it's an attitude that you just need to to listen to people to be here worrying and that's hard.

Speaker

Hmm hmm.

Speaker 2

Yeah, we worry about everything and the world is not easy right now, but.

Speaker

Right.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker

Yeah.

Speaker 2

Your world, your little world is right here. So what does it do right here?

Speaker 3

Hmm, that's so interesting. And I've got to say it's so and I want to ask another question, but it's so relevant to me this weekend because I've just been away with my kids. Yeah, actually, it was just me. And I said just. But it was me and the kids and no one else for a few days just cause my family were away and their dad. Was working and all lots of things and I was kind of a bit. Nervous, like without any other adults, there were people to talk to, and so I just really spent time with them. And there were times when it was quiet and there was times when it was chatting and and actually just really getting used to being in your own head for like, you know, three days. And just obviously I talked to them quite a lot, but there was times I didn't talk to them. And that's kind of I love to be around loads of people. You know, my favorite. Thing is to be in a group of 20 people, so to be the only adult. Three days is a big deal for me. But actually I was like, wow. I. Managed it you. Know I did it so it's kind of similar to you in the kind of. Being in your own space, you know.

Speaker 2

And the more you do it, the. More you're able. To do it, yeah, you know that taking time for yourself. And I didn't do it for many, many, many years. You know, I I I just didn't. And I should have. I also have a really good friend who's a coach and we talk usually every other week. Well, we talk at least once a month. But, you know, we try to talk every other week. She lives in, in outside of Washington, DC and she's one of these people who's very probing. And she always asks questions, and she wants to draw you up. And so in her own way, she helps me. But I don't. Really. Well, I I reciprocate in a different way because she obviously thinks about all this stuff for herself too. So I don't think about a lot of the things like you just asked.

Speaker 3

Yes.

Speaker 2

The. Directly, those things just sort of unfold for me.

Speaker 3

Hmm, that's interesting. And the books will have to go and look those books up, but it's about thinking and how to think and that sort of thing. It's about.

Speaker 2

A lot of it is, you know, we look around and we think, is this all there is? Uh. So there's a lot of that going on and I think there is a lot. We miss by. Not. Kind of trusting in tuition and paying attention to things without without getting involved in them. You can pay attention to things and not have a judgment about them.

Speaker 3

That's true. One thing I read really recently, which I think what you will like was about all a WWE the word or. Yeah or like wearing or and just how good it is to feel awe and and just also being excited by things and you know looking around and I think that's something that we do a lot on a bike and also walking you know it's just looking around and going wow or. You know, going to a different place and listening, you know, I love being a forest and really listening to the bird. And and and that sort of thing. And I think that keeps you young, really.

Speaker 2

Another point about bicycling and and I hear this from a lot of men, especially especially men who have super intense, high-powered jobs or careers that when they get on the bicycle, they allow themselves to just let go that without it their stress levels just. Go through the roof. So it's, you know that being outside being on the road, hearing the chain, hearing the wheels, whatever it is you're listening to.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

And not listening to that voice in your head that's making you crazy all the time.

Speaker 3

Right, right. Well, do you find that your voice get your thinking, your thoughts go quite positive when you're cycling. Like I'll have loads of ideas and get really excited. And I can kind of it's sort of all my good ideas come I think when I'm cycling I don't know if you find that.

Speaker 2

Well, when we want so you know, we ride a tandem and we we have radios on our helmets. So that we can. Actually talk to each other, because otherwise the wind noise you're screaming to hear and so often times.

Speaker 3

Ohh wow.

Speaker

Ah.

Speaker 2

We will have really good conversations, but then there are other times. When we don't talk at all. It just depends on the day and on what's going on.

Speaker

Yeah, OK, cool.

Speaker 3

And that was quite nice to have that naturalness, you know, and to not feel you have to. And I must just ask, does anyone have a photo of you psyching with your Siamese cat on your shoulder?

Speaker 2

No. So here's another interesting story about my mother. She was very strange. She did not like the way I looked, so she tore up all pictures of me between the ages of about 7 and 18. Well, there are. Unless somebody who knew me then has something. I have no pictures of myself.

Speaker

Oh.

Speaker 3

I would tell you today that I think you're beautiful and I would also. Really love for somebody to paint you as the the girl that you were with the Siamese cat. And I think that needs to be a. Painting that you hang in your house.

Speaker 2

That sounds like fun. I just don't know who would get me back to that 12 year old self 10/11/12 year old self.

Speaker 3

You'd have to describe it to them, your hair and everything, but I think that that, that painting needs.

Speaker 2

Well and yeah ohh my hair. My hair was nuts in those days.

Speaker 3

Someone needs to put it there any. Is anyone out there that wants to give a go at painting this? I'm sure that Diane could give a good description, but I feel like I need this. Painting in my house too. OK, we'll.

Speaker 2

We'll see if anybody. What's on that?

Speaker 3

Well, thank you for talking to me. Did you enjoy it? How was? That then, with being on the other side.

Speaker 2

It was fun. It was different. Yeah. It was easy. You make it easy.

Speaker 3

You'd be doing.

Speaker 2

Your own podcast.

Speaker 3

Ohh well I wait, but I really enjoyed talking to you and I'm glad I got to ask you all the questions that I. Was thinking last. Time. It's been really nice to hear your story and you've done so much and I know you know, I bet you've touched many more people than you. Even realise thank you, I hope.

Speaker 2

I hope that's true. I hope that's true.

Speaker 3

On the bike fitting and the organising and even listening. To this podcast.

Speaker 2

Well, my I'll give you one more story. It's my it's one of my favorite stories. I was in Denver at the North American Handmade show many years ago, which no, which is no

longer on, fortunately, Nabs NAHBS North American handmade bike show bicycle show. And I was talking to somebody and somebody tapped me on the shoulder. And said. Are you Diane? And I'm like. Yes. Well, I recognized your voice.

Speaker 3

Ohh. Well, isn't that something?

Speaker 2

That was so cute. Yeah, that somebody recognized my voice as the outspoken cyclist.

Speaker 3

Speaking. That is brilliant. Well, have a lovely day, Diana. Thank you. Talking to me.

Speaker 2

Two. Thanks. Thank God.

Speaker

Hi.

Speaker 2

Well, that was interesting and I hope you enjoyed it. Carla made it much easier than I thought it would be, and I appreciate her thoughtfulness and interest. As I mentioned at the top of the show, there are photos and links to much of what we chatted about at [outspokencyclist.com](http://outspokencyclist.com), as well as a written transcript of the conversation. I'll be back soon as we begin to highlight some of the trails that you've mentioned to me, beginning with the Ohio Erie Canal, I hope you'll TuneIn. Thanks for listening today. Remember that you can subscribe to the show on your favorite app so you never miss an episode. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Please stay safe. Stay well and remember there is always time for a ride. Bye bye.

Speaker 1

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