

Witness statement of Martin Hugh Porter

DOB 03.11.62

Occupation Barrister

I, MARTIN HUGH PORTER, make this statement in relation to the bad driving and verbal abuse which I experienced on 30th April 2012.

I have cycled regularly for many years and was trained to 'Bikeability' level 3 in summer 2010. I have a 3rd category British Cycling racing licence and also race regularly in the League of Veteran Racing Cyclists. I have also held a full driver's licence and motorcycle licence for around 30 years.

On Monday 30th April 2012, at 0758, I left my home in Sunningdale, Berkshire for my workplace in the Temple, Central London. I frequently ride my Genesis Day bicycle from my home to work and back. For training purposes I record my journeys on a satellite recording device called a Garmin 705 Edge. This records time, position and speed. My recollection as to times and speeds has been assisted by this device. I have also, since June 2010, recorded at least a part of my journey on a camera. That morning I had a 'Justice' camera (which had been loaned to me to undertake a review) mounted on my seatpost facing rearward and another camera, my own 'Veho Muvi' camera which was fixed to the top of my cycle helmet, pointing ahead. Both cameras record vision and audio onto removable SD cards. The helmet camera records files of 30 minutes duration and the seatpost camera records files in High Definition of 10 minutes duration. I turned the seatpost camera on as I left home. The helmet camera has a somewhat limited battery life and I turned it on when held at a red traffic light at Staines at about 0830. I use a camera in order to provide evidence in the event of a road traffic collision, to corroborate my evidence in the event that I report a crime to the police and to examine ways in which I might improve my own safety by riding defensively.

It was a dry sunny morning and relatively cool for late April. I was dressed in a bright yellow cycling jersey and in black leggings which had a yellow flash on the legs to aid conspicuity. Visibility was very good and I had not therefore turned on my lights.

My route takes me along the A315 eastbound through Hounslow town centre. I can recall looking at my watch as I approached the High Street, Hounslow and seeing that it was exactly

0900. The High Street is closed to cycle traffic from 0900 so I took the alternative route via Grove Road just to the south of the High Street. I first saw the green LandRover registration number G603CGM at 0901 when it was stationary behind a red bus at the traffic lights at the junction of Grove Road and Chapel Street. I know the road well and I knew there was an advanced stop line for cyclists at this junction. I prefer when possible to overtake traffic on the offside and so I moved out past the offside of the Landrover with a view to occupying the advanced stop box. As I got past the Landrover and closer to the bus I realised that the bus was already occupying the advanced stop box and the light then changed to red and amber in any event. I therefore moved behind the red bus and in front of the Landrover. I followed the bus up Hanworth Road.

I knew the bus would soon be approaching a stop which would in all probability hold up the motor vehicles behind me and I was, as recorded by my Garmin, travelling at 19.6 mph so I did not think there was any need to move to the side of the road to let the following traffic by. I was thinking ahead to when the bus stopped and I pulled out to overtake it.

The Landrover driver then overtook me. There was traffic including red buses coming the other way so he could not cross the white line in order to overtake. He nevertheless passed me. I have no doubt at all that he was dangerously close. The eastbound lane at this point is about 3 metres wide. I was approximately 1.0 to 1.1 metres from the kerb. The Landrover is about 1.8 metres wide. My right elbow and handlebars obviously extend to the offside of my centreline. The Landrover missed my right elbow by no more than 10 cms. Even with me moving over to the nearside as he passed it was an extremely close pass.

I am quite often passed too close for comfort but this was exceptional. I therefore decided to raise it with the driver when I drew alongside the Landrover at the next set of lights, where Hanworth Road rejoins the High Street.

There was then the following exchange between us (I have written the swear words backwards as I know the Metropolitan Police have a system that blocks e mails containing swear words):

Me; "You were too close"

Driver: "I'll kill ya; I'd kill ya. You get in my way I'd fucking kill ya"; Simultaneously me; "You were too close"

Me: "That's not a very responsible attitude is it?"

Driver: "Get out of my fucking way, you cunt."

Me: "Not a very responsible attitude is it?"

Driver: "Wanker, get out of my way". [Indistinct].. "people like you.. This is a road not a fucking cycle (sic)... you're in Richmond Park doing 35 mph.

The speed limit's 20, so don't tell me"

Me: "I am telling you to take care around cyclists"

Driver; "You're a wanker. Keep out the way. At the side of the road. On the pavement next time". Me simultaneously: "You knew you were close. You knew you were close"

At this point, 0903, the lights changed. The Landrover turned left. He did not indicate but fortunately I was to his offside anyway. When I approach drivers that I cannot trust, I try to stop alongside them so that they cannot run me down.

Although my helmet camera picked up the conversation it did not pick up a clear image of the driver. My recollection is that he was a white male in his 50s with a ruddy complexion and white hair. I was not in any position to judge whether he had been drinking alcohol.

Although I have never ridden my bicycle in Richmond Park, I am aware that some of the London Cycling Clubs hold training sessions and time trials in Richmond Park. The rather odd reference to Richmond Park and the reference to 'people like you' indicate that he has some hostility to cyclists and this explains his pointless and dangerous overtaking manoeuvre.

Later that day I put together the section of rear video footage and front video footage and uploaded it to 'youtube' with a private setting so that it could be viewed by the Metropolitan Police. I reported the incident via the online Metropolitan Police 'Roadsafe' site that evening. The following morning I received a response from 'Roadsafe' asking me to report it to a local police station and I therefore on 1st May 2012 reported the incident to Hounslow Police.

I retain the original recording from the SD card from the helmet camera in my possession. The seatpost camera has such a high memory demand that I need to overwrite the card for every journey. I have though preserved a cut section of this footage on my computer.

Martin Porter

8th May 2012.