

Jeff Around Town – July 12th, 2024

Jeff: Good morning, Otis.

Otis: There you are.

Jeff: There I am.

Otis: Yeah. I knew you were there.

Jeff: I'm here somewhere. Otis, have you ever ridden a bike?

Otis: Yes. I had a Schwinn. I had an Italian bike. I forget the brand was.

Jeff: Italian bike.

Otis: Well, I had, you know, the 10-speed. It was my first really fancy bike.

Jeff: Sure, sure.

Otis: With the really narrow, narrow, narrow tires.

Jeff: Oh, yeah. Those.

Otis: And then my brother, of course, had a Stingray with a banana seat and the Mattel Verum engine on it.

Jeff: Oh, yeah. Well, I also had a Schwinn, and I'll never forget the first time that I rode a bike without training wheels. I think it was around five, and I had that Schwinn Stingray. I was in Brown Park in South Omaha, and my dad gave me a push, and off I went. I was flying, and I thought he was still behind me, and he wasn't, and it was magic. I felt like I was, you know, flying, and, you know, for a kid, there's something about a bike that represents freedom.

Otis: Yeah.

Jeff: You know, the ability to go somewhere without asking mom for a ride or having to take the bus, but I would eventually leave my cycling days in the past, and I did briefly flirt with an old 10-speed as an adult a number of years ago, but otherwise, Otis, I have been bike-less in Omaha, so the last few months, I kept thinking, you know, might be fun to ride a bike again, and I looked into a few possibilities, but they were all over my budget. My needs, Otis, are super simple when it comes to something like that, and then I came into an inexpensive and basic Schwinn, the same blue, not a Stingray, but the same blue like I had as a kid, plus it had the name Voyager spelled the French way, Voyager, so I knew I knew it was meant to be, but I had two questions.

Otis: Bon voyage.

Jeff: Bon voyage. I needed to answer, you know, is that old saying true? The one that says it's like riding a bike, you know, implies that once you learn, you never forget, and also, did I need a helmet? Because when I was a kid, we didn't, you didn't wear a helmet, did you?

Otis: No, we were stupid.

Jeff: I didn't wear a helmet, and I had, well, I had hair then, and I remember that feeling of the wind blowing in my hair, and you know, the situation is a little different now, and I also, I can be kind of clumsy, so I bought a helmet, of course, and then I, you know, I wanted to test out the old saying, and it is true. I hopped on the bike, and it really was as if I'd never stopped riding, and I think it's all about muscle memory, you know, one of those kind of things.

Otis: Yeah, yeah. Something about it.

Jeff: So, my maiden voyage, I rode through the Old Market and along the Riverfront and over the Bob into Iowa, and I could, you know, see the flooding, and then I would return there a few times and watch the flooding going down, but here's what a dork I am, Otis. There's a photo of me taken by my friend, Nicole LeClerc, whom I saw in the old market. So, the photo on our social media, if you go to it, and we'll post this photo online with this episode, there's a little Easter egg there. If you zoom in on my helmet, you can see that I'd been riding around for quite a while with a sticker that has an L on it for large. I assume it wasn't for loser, just I'm riding around waving at people like a dork with a big L sticker on my helmet. So, all kidding aside, though, I can report that even though I drive, even though I've taken trains and flown a bunch, soaring on a bike, even with no flowing hair and wearing a helmet is liberating. So, for you, if it's been a while since you've ridden a bike, but you've been dreaming of getting back to it, what's stopping you? And really the same could be said for any activity that you did, maybe when you were younger. Maybe you play the piano or violin. Chances are your muscle memory will help you remember. But if you get a bike, do a wear a helmet and just be sure, take off the price tags and the stickers.

Otis: And get a banana seat and a vroom.

Jeff: And a sissy bar.

Otis: And a sissy bar.

Jeff: That's another Jeff around town, Otis.

Otis: Do a wheelie.

Jeff: Do a wheelie. I used to have the little front tire in the front.

Otis: Did you do wheelies?

Jeff: I did do wheelies.

Otis: You did do wheelies?

Jeff: Yeah.

Otis: There's a little memory. Jump back on that bike.

Jeff: I saw a guy doing a wheelie on a motorcycle recently and thought he was going to tip over.

Otis: Yeah, I worry about them. I do. I worry. Hey, thanks.

Jeff: Thanks, Otis. Jeff around town every Friday, 8:45.