

NEW YORK POST

City cyclists injured or killed when ‘doored’ by careless drivers

By [Susan Edelman](#)



Flanzig client Jesse Hochmuth displays a torn bicep after being hit by a car door while bicycling. He won a \$210K settlement

New York City cyclists ride in fear of getting “doored” — crashing into parked-vehicle doors suddenly opened in their path. “I see it all the time and it really pisses me off. People don’t look,” said Tom Georgiades, 59, who was thrown off his bike on Bell Boulevard in Bayside, Queens, when a plumber swung open a van door. He landed on his back and broke a clavicle.

“Dooring” has killed several cyclists in recent years. Jasmine Herron, 23, an art-college graduate, was pedaling on Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn in 2010 when a woman suddenly got out of her parked car. Herron was hurled into the path of oncoming city bus.

With ongoing efforts to make the city more bicycle-friendly — including added bike lanes and the Citi Bike sharing system — the number of careless motorists and passengers caught unsafely opening doors into traffic and approaching cyclists is creeping up. But the number of incidents is thought to be much higher, because cops normally won’t give a ticket unless they witness a violation.

*“The population of cyclists in the city is growing, but the awareness of this dangerous act of opening a door into traffic is not,” said **Daniel Flanzig, an attorney.***

Flanzig said half his bike-crash cases involve dooring, with more than 35 clients injured in the past two years, many of whom win settlements. Under state and city traffic laws, it's the duty of a person opening a car door to look first. Taxi passengers must exit curbside. A **Flanzig** client recently won a \$140,000 settlement for getting doored on 10th Street while cycling in a bike lane. The exiting cab passenger and the cabby paid up.

Georgiades set out to enjoy a leisurely 18-mile loop in Bayside on St. Patrick's Day 2011. He watched out for people in parked cars who might be getting out, but the plumber was lying on his side when he kicked the door ajar. "It opened a fraction of a second before I hit it," Georgiades said. While spread-eagle on his back, he recalled, the plumber yelled at him, "Get up, you stupid f-k!" Jesse Hochmuth, 29, said he was riding close to the parking lane on 13th Street because cars were trying to pass when a door flung open. He tried to pull away, but his right arm hit the door's edge and he was tossed onto his back, his bicep torn. "There's always a danger to bikers, no matter where you are," said Hochmuth, for whom **Flanzig secured a \$210,000 settlement.**