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On July 17, 1997, at a memorial vigil in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, New York, Charles Komanoff put into words the response of the cycling community to the death of Rachel Fruchter.

*Rachel Fruchter* is dead because, while she rode her bicycle in Prospect Park on the morning of July 12, a Saturday, a van struck her from behind and dragged her more than 50 feet before flinging her against a kerb.

*Rachel Fruchter*, wife of Norman, mother of Lev and Chenda, daughter of Gertrude Gillet, sister of Simon, Matthew and Peter, is dead because the City of New York permits motorists to drive in Prospect Park, not only on weekdays, but on 'car-free' weekends and holidays for access to a parking lot.

*Rachel Fruchter*, 57, biochemist and women's health researcher, is dead because, like hundreds of other motorists, the driver of the van was misusing the Prospect Park drive as a shortcut to avoid busy city streets.

*Rachel Fruchter*, an associate professor of obstetrics and gynaecology at the State University of New York's Health Science Center in Brooklyn, is dead because the van, a 1982 Chevrolet, had a cracked windshield, which may have impeded the driver's ability to see in front of him.

*Rachel Fruchter*, whose research focused on gynecological cancer and the epidemiology of cancer, is dead because, as



inferred by police from skid marks left by the vehicle, the van was travelling at 41 miles per hour (65km/h), far in excess of any reasonable speed in a crowded park and 11 mph (18km/h) over the legal limit.

*Rachel Fruchter*, a founder of Health Right and a contributor to the landmark *Our Bodies, Our Selves: A Book By and For Women*, published by the Boston Women's Health Collective, is dead because government and corporations marginalise, abuse and refuse to serve people who dare to travel without using automobiles.

*Rachel Fruchter*, who graduated from Oxford University and earned a PhD in biochemistry from Rockefeller University in 1966 and a master's degree in public health from Columbia in 1973, is dead because opportunistic politicians demonise cyclists instead of tackling the difficult work of changing the entrenched system of automobile-centered traffic engineering and vehicular entitlement that kills 20 bicyclists and 250 pedestrians a year in New York City.

*Rachel Fruchter*, who taught obstetrics and gynecology for a quarter of a century, is dead because the Mayor and

his Police Department ticket bicyclists, including those forced to violate traffic laws to protect themselves, and never once summon motorists for intimidating cyclists or denying them their lawful right of way on public streets.

*Rachel Fruchter*, whose research established that immigrant women without access to adequate healthcare suffer higher rates of cervical cancer, is dead because no place in our city – not the streets, not the sidewalks (where 15 pedestrians a year are killed by cars), not even the parks – is safe from marauding automobiles.

*Rachel Fruchter*, who worked to improve healthcare for women from the Caribbean islands and other immigrant populations throughout central Brooklyn, is dead because the police investigate only a fraction of the several hundred pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities each year, and refer a mere handful of these to district attorneys for prosecution.

*Rachel Fruchter*, who was investigating how the human papilloma virus relates to AIDS, is dead because when it comes to pedestrians, skaters, and bicycle-riders, drivers know they can get away with murder.