

My name is Pete Reyes and I'm married to Tiffani and we are raising two boys, Jack and Ryatt Reyes. We are the Reyes Family and This is our bike story.

Tiffani and I were born and raised in West Texas. In an oil town named Midland, Texas. Midland is probably most famous for being the hometown of president George Dubya Bush. Midland is 5 hours west of Dallas and 5 hours East of El Paso. That region of Texas is very flat land, it's dusty, just mesquite trees, no lakes, no mountains, and the summers are brutal. It would be over 100 degrees for one, even two months solid. Midland is a pretty rural town so people don't ride a lot of Bikes there because it's HOT and there is a ton of empty land in-between destinations so the thing to do is to get around in a car or if you're lucky- a big ol' pick up truck. Which is perfectly fine because most vehicles have AC because let me remind you it is HOT.

Tiffani and I enjoyed our lives in Texas but we are an interracial couple and living in the south and we never really felt like we belonged. We were unfulfilled. Once we started having boys we really started itching for another way of life we thought surely better things are possible. But we stayed because of family, the cost of moving and because we really enjoyed eating WHataburger and BBQ and various other small town Texas comforts. We hoped for change but the years just trickled by. As years typically do.

Let's fast forward to 2020 and boy did things change. This once in lifetime pandemic happened.

Suddenly, everything was closed. My wife and everyone started working from home. The boys were sent home from school. Me and my two young boys would sleep all day and then stay up all night playing Fortnite or Minecraft.

I remember one time early in the pandemic having stayed up with the kids and it was like 6 in the morning. My wife was just getting up to start working on her computer. I told her goodnight and was getting a glass of water in the kitchen and I noticed her lighting up a joint and starting her work day. That was the first time I saw her start her work day joint in hand but she told me she had been doing it every morning for the last 2 weeks. She smiled at me and said "THIS IS THE NEW NORMAL". So it was a nice little joke between us when we would try to make light of how things had changed.

Spending all that time at home during a pandemic and during an election year really made us re-examine our priorities. We decided that we MUST move on from Texas if we were going to show our boys that better things are possible

So in the spirit of that we decided to essentially risk it all and move to the state of Washington. Now, we did not know a single soul in Tacoma Washington but we did know that there were big trees, a big mountain, and that it wouldn't be 100 degrees for 30 days in a row every summer. In August of 2020 we packed up everything we owned, ALMOST everything we owned into a Uhaul and moved our two boys all the way across the country.

When we packed that Uhaul in Texas it was 104 degrees. When we arrived on Aug 3rd in Tacoma, it was 72 degrees. I felt pretty proud of myself that we made the right decision, We are showing the boys that better things are possible. So with 2 energetic boys who still were not completely convinced that moving thousands of miles from everyone they've ever known was in their best interest. We started exploring our new neighborhood on Hilltop. Hilltop was far from the rural area we grew up in. It had sidewalks, murals, and I've never seen so many bike lanes.

In order to acclimate the boys, we walked around up and down MLK catching Pokemon on our phone. We would often pass this big yellow building that always had a line going out of the door. One of the things that I learned in Texas is that "it has to be good if there is a line." That building and line was 2nd Cycle. During one of our MLK walks, my oldest boy Jack noticed people coming out of that building and hopping on their bikes and he turned and asked me, "Dad where are our bikes?"

ONE QUICK ASIDE: And People in Tacoma will understand this because this is a city full of transplants like us. My mind drifted back to that 100 degree day packing the truck in Texas. Well when you pack a moving truck, a lot of things get left behind. And one of the things that got left behind was the boy's bikes. The boys really hadn't used them much and they just didn't make it when we ran out of truck space. Didn't think much of it. Until my boy turned and asked me that question.

That was when I realized that we moved on from Texas to show our boys that better things are possible and I left behind the bikes.

The boys first few weeks in Tacoma were pretty glum because of the move and the isolation caused by the pandemic. So in an effort to cheer them up my wife waited in the line one day at 2nd cycle to get them a bike. That was actually one of the first public interactions the boys had since arriving to Tacoma and it couldn't have gone better. The folks at 2nd cycle couldn't wait to help us choose the perfect bike for our boys. There was actually only 1 in the right size available that day but they said that another one would be ready soon and that they would call us. That one bike changed the entire trajectory of our Tacoma experience.

The boys had to take turns on that one bike for about a week and it really cheered them up more than anything else we had done. Even more than fortnite, or Minecraft, or catching Pokemon. The next week we got the next bike and, at that point, our two boys were off to the races.

Well there were only so many miles that my wife could do walking behind them and chasing them before she told me that she was going to buy her own bike. Now, I'm ashamed to admit that my wife and I have been together 20 years and until Tacoma I had never seen her ride a bike. It was unlike her, But she told me "THIS IS THE NORMAL"

So she bought herself a bike. And that made me jealous and so we bought me a bike. By that time we were doing the slow and social group rides with the 2nd Cycle folks riding around Hilltop. Eating popsicles at Wright Park and just soaking up the PNW vibes from the beautiful summer and all the wonderful bike people. The 2nd Cycle folks Alvaro, Matt, Noah, Gus, Emily, the whole crew there had this passion for bikes and community that was so exciting.

BY 2021 THE BOYS WERE FINALLY BACK TO IN PERSON SCHOOL MY YOUNGEST BIKED OFF TO 3RD GRADE, AND MY OLDEST TO 4TH GRADE. AND, SOMETIMES, WE WOULD ALL 4 BIKE TO STANLEY AND IT HELPED US MEET THE OTHER FAMILIES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND WE REALLY STARTED TO FEEL LIKE WE BELONGED IN TACOMA. THAT SUMMER CAME AND THE BOYS DID THE 2ND CYCLE BIKE CAMPS AND THERE ADVENTURES WERE NUMEROUS, I WOULD BE SO JEALOUS WHEN THEY WOULD TALK ABOUT BIKING ALL THE WAY TO DEFIANCE, OR TO THE NARROWS BRIDGE, OR JUST TO THE SKATEBOARD SHOP ON 7TH.

AND AS A FAMILY WE WOULD RIDE TO THE GRAND CINEMA TO WATCH A MOVIE, TO WRIGHT PARK TO CATCH POKEMON, TO JOHNSON'S FOR A SWEET TREAT, OR TO MACCARVER ELEMENTARY TO THROW THE FOOTBALL AND WATCH THE SUN SET ON THE MOUNTAIN. WE SPEND SO MUCH TIME OUTSIDE BECAUSE OF BIKES.

ONE OF THE HEARTWARMING QUESTIONS THAT THE BOYS ASK US WHEN WE TELL THEM WHERE WE ARE GOING THAT THEY NEVER ASKED IN TEXAS IS "ARE WE BIKING THERE?" AND YES, SOMETIMES WITH DREAD BUT MOST TIMES WITH DELIGHT

TODAY, I'M PROUD TO REPORT THAT WE HAVE 2 YEARS IN TACOMA UNDER OUR BELT. WE ARE HAPPIER AND HEALTHIER THAN THE DAY WE LEFT TEXAS. THE SUMMERS HERE ARE AMAZING. WE HAVE BARELY EVEN NOTICED THE TWO TIMES THAT IT'S REACHED TRIPLE DIGITS IN TACOMA SINCE WE ARRIVED. HILLTOP REALLY FEELS LIKE THE HOME WE ALWAYS WANTED AND BIKING HAS REALLY HELPED US MAKE THE CONNECTION THAT WE ARE PART OF A COMMUNITY. HILLTOP IS OUR COMMUNITY. WE BELONG. I WANT TO THANKS 2ND CYCLE FOR BEING A CRITICAL PART OF OUR HILLTOP COMMUNITY.

To wrap this story/love letter up: We did it! we moved from Texas to Tacoma to show our boys that better things are possible and, yes, I left behind the bikes but now we have 4 bikes. AND THATS OUR NEW NORMAL