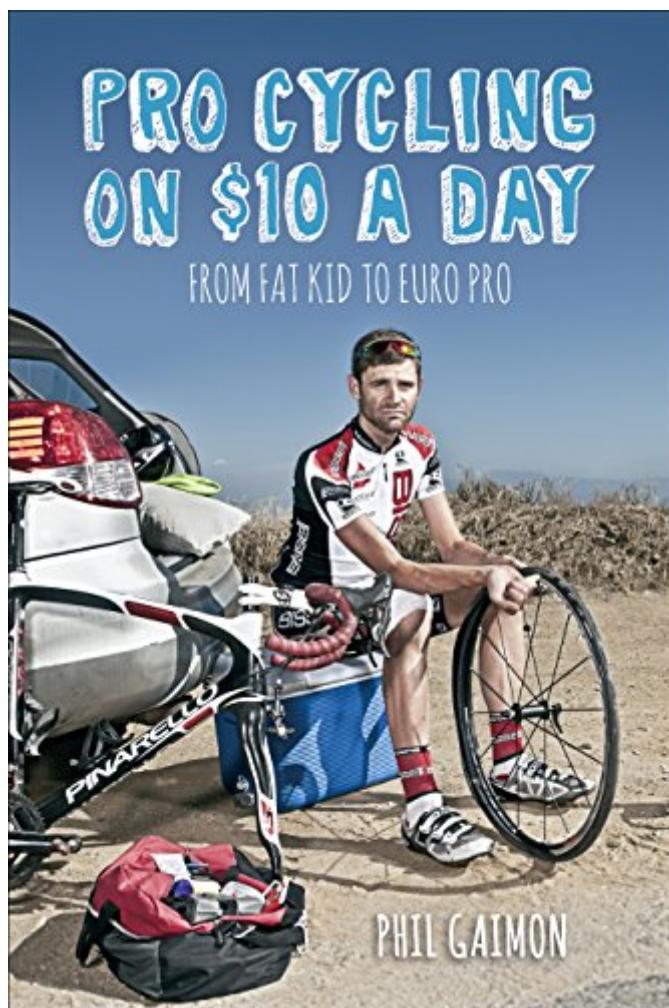


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Pro Cycling On \$10 A Day: From Fat Kid To Euro Pro



Synopsis

Plump, grumpy, slumped on the couch, and going nowhere fast at age 16, Phil Gaimon began riding a bicycle with the grand ambition of shedding a few pounds before going off to college. He soon fell into racing and discovered he was a natural, riding his way into a pro contract after just one season despite utter ignorance of a century of cycling etiquette. Now, in his book *Pro Cycling on \$10 a Day*, Phil brings the full powers of his wit to tell his story. Presented here as a guide--and a warning--to aspiring racers who dream of joining the professional racing circus, Phil's adventures in road rash serve as a hilarious and cautionary tale of frustrating team directors and broken promises. Phil's education in the ways of the peloton, his discouraging negotiations for a better contract, his endless miles crisscrossing America in pursuit of race wins, and his conviction that somewhere just around the corner lies the ticket to the big time fuel this tale of hope and ambition from one of cycling's best story-tellers. *Pro Cycling on \$10 a Day* chronicles the racer's daily lot of blood-soaked bandages, sleazy motels, cheap food, and overflowing toilets. But it also celebrates the true beauty of the sport and the worth of the journey, proving in the end that even among the narrow ranks of world-class professional cycling, there will always be room for a hard-working outsider.

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Customer Reviews

I raced and worked in bike shops in the 80s and early 90s and realized pretty soon I'd never make it as a pro. This book really shows just how hard it is and what it takes. It's also a hilarious read. Also, I was a big fan of guys like Alexi Grewal, Greg Lemond and Andy Hampsten. I always knew Lance was probably doping (everyone starting with Indurain was doping) but seeing guys like Tyler Hamilton have these incredible results just killed my interest in following pro cycling. But Phil Gaimon has got me interested again (and I love how he slams Tyler in the dedication at the front).

I've been cycling for about 3 years now and really have no interest in racing myself but have always been curious about what goes on in the world of pro cycling. This book lays it all out from an insider's perspective with a humorous slant on most of his experiences as an up-and-coming pro. The book is a quick read and broken into several short stories. It almost reads like a series of blog posts which, in my opinion, is a fun and easy to read format. The book is definitely an eye-opener into what these guys have to go through (low or no pay, constant travel with bad accommodations and what sounds like really bad food and often times bad company) just to get to the pro level. All that being said, it's hard to feel bad for someone who gets to ride their bike as a profession regardless of what it pays. All said, I recommend the book and can definitely see myself re-reading it in the future. It's a great insight into what's going on behind the scenes of pro cycling.

Love this book and Phil. He is so down to earth, and this is one of the better rider accounts of what it takes to be a pro cyclist. It's no holes barred...he tells the truth. Would love to find the same type of account from a Euro pro coming up through the ranks, and what the experience is like across the pond.

If nothing else, this is a story of hard work and perseverance...and how they may or may not pay off. Despite his bumps and bruises along the way, I think this funny, lighthearted narrative inspires one to "follow your dreams" and laugh it off whenever you can. Here is a passage from the book that provides a peek into his perspective on life (which I think is advanced for his age), humor, and ability to offer some truly useful advice: "A big goal like starting a business or writing a book can be daunting at first, but all you need to do is break it up into little pieces and keep working at it. You

could eat a school bus if you ground it up and sprinkled it on your oatmeal every morning. Juggling it all was stressful at first, but it was also satisfying to get things done. Everyone is always searching for happiness, but satisfaction is almost as good and much easier to achieve. I also like his "gloves off" approach the Lance Armstrong's giant lie, clarifying in graphic terms why Lance will never have the balls that someone like Besty Andreu does. (Sorry, Besty.)

For some reason there has been a proliferation of "insider" books by current/former pro cyclists, but this is probably one of the more entertaining, and one likely actually written by the author. What's particularly nice about this one is that it is focused on the US pro cycling scene; others tend to be about US cyclists who have gone to Europe ("A Dog in a Hat" is particularly good). Plus, you can root for Phil as he has just started in European campaign with Garmin. The book also is written from the "post-Lance" perspective, and for better or worse, the author's bitterness towards what that era has done to the sport (and towards Lance himself and others like Francisco Mancebo) comes out from time to time in the book. He also does little to hide the macho/boys-will-be-boys culture of cycling; it's not limited to cycling and he's to be credited for being honest, but some may be put off by it (as indicated in other reviews). More than anything, this comes across as an honest book, and Phil's ability to make a cycling career and pursue other businesses to make ends meet is very interesting to follow. How well he'll do in Europe remains to be seen, but he has a career waiting for him once he is finished. If you are into cycling (or have enjoyed Phil's columns in VeloNews), this is a good book to read. It may not be as informative or as well written as Lance Armstrong's War or The Secret Race, but it is worth the read.

As a pro cycling fan, my education into the sport was long and difficult as pro cycling is unfortunately a niche sport in a nation more enamored with the ball sports. My learning about cycling was based on books, articles, and narratives from the riders and teams at the top of cycling's food chain. This level of the sport obviously got the attention of people based on the "Lance Effect" that sparked interest in professional cycling at the level of Pro Tour teams (my interest was actually based on Greg LeMond's career in the 80's). Phil Gaimon was someone I knew through his monthly "Ask a Pro" articles in VeloNews - always sharp and witty commentary. His book is a great way to understand life at the other end of the food chain. I was amazed at how tough life is for a rider trying to survive in a sport that paid low salaries, provided little support and called upon guile and cunning to succeed. Thanks to the personal narrative of his career, I now have much greater respect for riders on the National Racing Calendar (NRC) who are out there competing with little recognition.

They are the foundation of the sport and the farm club for the future. Thanks to events like the US PRO National Championships, I get to watch the NRC and Pro Tour riders compete together and see that great cyclists are present at both levels. Chapeau to Phil for his book and for furthering my education into the toughest sport around.

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