

‘Retrospectives’ Podcast Episode 6 — Catching Up With Tom Danielson

In 2015, elite American climber and one-time Tour de France top 10 finisher [Tom Danielson](#) exited the professional peloton unceremoniously, after a positive drug test he claims came from a tainted supplement that affected testosterone levels. At age 38, instead of taking a suspension from USADA, he decided to retire. “It was a big move for me, but I had to just move forward.”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MF2BRyJ1sjM&ab_channel=TheOuterLine

In his first extended interview since his retirement, Danielson addresses the difficulties and disappointment of his hasty retirement and directly confronts the controversy which followed. He talks about the cycling media community, which he believes never really gave him a fair hearing, and discloses that he dealt with anxiety issues throughout his cycling career.

Danielson was once one of the most animated American cyclists and a fan favorite at the prominent American races like the Amgen Tour of California, USA Pro Challenge, and Tour of Utah. He still holds the record for many of the country’s toughest climbs, and he always seemed to get tougher the steeper the road got, especially at high altitudes. But after the positive test, he was thrust into a period of self-examination, on and off the bike. He also went through a difficult divorce around the same time. “Let’s face it, I’ve had some scars on my career. My image was destroyed, and I had to change my perspective.”

But in his own affable and credible way, “Tommie D.” has rebounded and has built a burgeoning cycling business called CINCH – which comprises coaching, a development team, a new retail location, and a bike shop in Longmont, Colorado. It’s been a cathartic process for Danielson, and several years away from the pro peloton has given him a broader perspective – on both bike racing and the difficult choices which riders of his era faced. He seems more at peace now, and his coaching business is booming – and he wants to stay involved in cycling over the longer term. “When I retired, everybody thought I was a piece of crap ... I realized I had to just maintain a positive attitude, and try to reinvent myself.”

The [Apple podcast is available for direct download](#) from The Outer Line podcast channel.

The audio-only direct download is also [available from Spotify](#).