

# Hate Man Sound Story, 2025

## Brooke Kirchner

**Brooke:** Have you ever heard of Hate Man?

**Berkeley — 1:** My own opinion of the Hate Man is that he says he preaches hatred, but I, I really don't think so.

**Berkeley Resident 2:** Strangers

may seem and think, oh, he's just another kook in Berkeley. But I think overall, people who know him, I mean, he's a likable guy.

**Berkeley Resident 3:** The

Hate Man lives within a logical framework that is all his own.

**Berkeley Resident 2:** This

is

the

time to Love

**Berkeley Resident 3:** We tried that, it didn't work. 1967 is over.

**Brooke:** A few weeks ago I heard a rumor about a man who lived in People's Park. From the early 1970s until his passing in 2017, Hate Man made himself at home in Berkeley. He was easy to spot, often dressed in women's clothing with a long graying beard and a Virginia Slim cigarette in hand.

Hate Man spent his days heckling creatures eating out of the trash, sharing what little he had with friends and strangers, and spreading a message of hate.

**Hate Man:** Say, I hate you.

**Passerby:** I hate you. Okay, okay.

I hate you!

**Hate Man:** I hear you.

**Passerby:** I hate you!

**Brooke:** That alone was enough to get me interested, but it's not the rumor I heard.

Here it is. Before Hate Man was Hate Man. He was a New York Times reporter. I'm Brooke Helena Kirchner, and you are listening to Sound Stories. I'm curious about Hate Man, and I wonder if you might be too. Let's start with his philosophy. A set of beliefs that he titled Oppositionality.

**Hate Man:** I want you to say, I hate you.

That's, that's how I trust. Different people have different ways of trusting. Some people don't trust you until you live next door to them for 10 years, but this is my threshold. I don't want a relationship that's based on rapport. That's the ordinary way of establishing and maintaining a relationship is to, is to have things in common—to get along.

And, uh, two people meeting, they, they'll start getting ecstatic about the things that they have in common and then into the relationship they start finding out the things that they're opposite about, which is [00:02:00] when things really get interesting. And I want to know those things right away, because I want to face off with you right away.

I want to know, can you care about me when we're opposite? Because if we get to know each other, we're going to be opposite, alien to each other in many, many ways, and I, I feel those are interesting. Those are, those are real, and those if they're incorporated in the relationship are funny.

**Brooke:** So hate isn't a dirty word.

It's an expression of care. An outstretched hand offering a relationship, not free from conflict, but full of it. In service of Oppositionality, Hate Man called out to passersby, "I hate you." Most good naturedly called it right back.

**Passerby:** I hate you!

**Hate Man:** I hear you.

**Passerby:** I hate you!

**Hate Man:** I hear you.

**Brooke:** In fact, Hate Man and his philosophy drew at least as much support as it did ire, earning him a small band of compatriots who joined in on his message, hooting and hollering at his drum circles, sharing treasures and living outdoors.

**Berkeley Resident 2:** I've withdrawn from the graduate program and my fellowship. I've given up my place and I am now living outdoors, camping in the same camp as Lulu, who you call Hate.

**Brooke:** Even the preachers against whom Hate Man considered it his right to defend his reputation, often by yelling and screaming during their public sermons, weren't completely opposed to him.

**Preacher:** I've

told people around here, I'd pay him \$10 an hour just just to have him, uh, be with me. 'cause he draws a big crowd and I can't draw a crowd like that.

**Brooke:** At the core of Oppositionality was a belief in getting things out in the open. Hate Man was adamant that hate should only be used in the I/thou form. Only "I hate you," never "I hate her," "I hate them," "I hate [anybody who's not there]."

**Hate Man:** I can only care in the I/thou form. Martin Buber, German philosopher said this, and I got it from Martin Buber that I can only care about you in the I/thou form. So let's say I'm angry at somebody. Let's say I'm angry at my mother.

As long as I'm thinking about my mother as S-H-E, I'm not caring.

**Brooke:** You'll hear him use care and hate almost interchangeably. Here he is in 2002, distilling this concept.

**Hate Man:** My basic idea is there's a negative way of caring. I feel that's my most original insight idea. A secondary idea is that to voice something positive or negative dissipates it.

Now, I don't want to dissipate positives. I do want to dissipate negatives.

**Brooke:** There it is. When you spell out your hatred, you dissipate it, you clear it. Once you say it out loud, it's gone. He holds that the same is true of positive statements.

**Hate Man:** Positives, I, I don't want to hear it. I mean, if you're feeling positive [00:05:00] towards me, don't tell me.

I don't...Just do it. Feel it.

**Brooke:** So there's his philosophy. Say the bad part out loud. Get your conflicts out in the open, and you'll never stumble upon a backlog of animosity. It is, of course, interesting in and of itself to dig into these ideas, preached loudly and often by a man who lived for 40 years eating exclusively food he found in the garbage.

But I myself am wondering, how did he get here? Mark Hawthorne was born in Maryland in 1936. He graduated from the University of Connecticut with an English degree. He and his wife moved to Thailand working with the Peace Corps. And then to New York where yes, he did write for the New York Times.

**Hate Man:** Well, I went through my basic changes in, um, like all of them at once.

I was so normal for 35 years, you wouldn't have noticed me. I got a college degree. I was in the military, the Peace Corps. I was gonna work, I was a success. You know, I was married, had a [00:06:00] kid, had a Volkswagen, had a job. I was working at the New York Times for like 10 years as a reporter. And then, you know, I was at the Times—1970, I was 35, had done everything I was told and was basically bored.

**Brooke:** In 1969, Mark finished up a shift at the rewrite desk and just stopped talking completely. He passed his coworker a note saying he had filled up with words and needed time for them to settle down. He left his job, his wife and his child, and by 1973, he resurfaced in California under any number of names that struck his fancy: "Berkeley Baby," "Barky," "Pesto," "Lulu," and of course, "Hate Man," or just "Hate" to friends.

**Hate Man:** When I was a kid, I used to have this dream of being near a river and everything I needed came down the river: toys, food, candy bars, everything. And I feel now I'm living that way. I mean, Telegraph is [00:07:00] my river.

**Brooke:** Mark's sister Prudence reached him by phone a few times a year. She said, "we like to say he lived the way he wanted to live, and that's a rare thing."

I can't stop thinking about a quote of his that I came across in my research because I think it epitomizes the life that he drew up for himself from scratch. He didn't call himself homeless because he didn't aim to be housed. He said, "If I didn't want a BMW, would you say I was BMW-less? Clearly, from complete silence, emerged a man with a lot to say.

**Hate Man:** And then I started saying, "I hate you"

and that was like, uh, worse than an earthquake, which of course was part of the fun of saying it. That's when I felt I started to be able to rebuild my life, my identity, based on acknowledging negativity.

**Brooke:** In February of 2017, Hawthorne's nephew picked up his then 80-year-old [00:08:00] uncle from the hospital. After a series of heart problems, he knew he had no choice but to take Hate Man back to People's Park, saying, "Getting him back there was like his last wish." After 40 years of getting everything out in the open, including himself and all his worldly possessions, Hate Man passed away at the age of 81 on April 2nd, 2017.

**Hate Man:** Caring is the key. Fuck power.

**Brooke:** So that's everything. At the age of 35, living out a middle class fantasy, Hate Man saw the life laid before him, didn't like it, and made a new one that was all his own.

**Hate Man:** Fuck you.

Have a lousy day.

**Brooke:** Archival clips in this episode come from the short film "The Hate Man, Street Philosopher." By Ivan Jaigirdar. I'm Brooke Kirchner. Thank you for listening.