



Article Side

A Waterman Named Waterman by [Original Watermen](#)

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Marcus White-Waterman is how he introduced himself. "Really?" I replied, not quite realizing until after I spoke that my incredulity could cause offense, or at least an uncomfortable moment of silence. I doubled down: "Really? That's your name?"

"Hyphenated, actually," he said. "White and Waterman. Sometime in the past a proud woman refused to surrender her name when she married, but didn't want to ignore her husband because his name 'Waterman' meant something in the community."

White-Waterman. The name fit his appearance. He looked like a creature of a white water ocean: bleach-blond hair, deeply tanned skin, a lean almost slippery physique. He looked to be pushing 50, but as full of life as anyone I knew half his age. In my mind I tried to guess what it was he might have done in the water; clearly he did something there and completely infused his appearance. "So you seem somehow to live your name, Waterman. Do you surf?"

"Of course, I should call myself mainly an under-waterman these days. I free dive deep."

I couldn't help but raise my eyebrows. I knew the world of free diving. I'd lost a close friend to free diving. We were two ordinary boys as kids, but as we grew up differences emerged. Unlike me he was a daredevil, always pushing boundaries. He was a natural waterman, seemed almost to have gills "until that one day he didn't come back. It was a strange coincidence that I would meet Marcus White-Waterman this day standing in line at the supermarket. I normally don't chat up people around me. Subconsciously I must have seen my friend in him.

"It was nice chatting with you," he said as he grabbed his groceries. "If you're interested I live on sea and I offer classes near the Oceanside marina." He pulled out a scruffy looking card and handed it to me. It looked like it had been wet. "First lesson is on me."

I smiled. Me a waterman? I knew there was so much more to the word waterman than just free diving and surfing to be called a seasoned man of the sea. However, maybe somehow my friend found me. Maybe his spirit prompted me to start speaking to a stranger in line at the supermarket. Maybe he's now another hyphen added to Mr. White-Waterman.

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