

# Katz '89: Bringing Out the Best in New York, One Subway Stop at a Time

by [Isabel Fowler](#) 21 hours ago



*Already a viral sensation, Date While You Wait's popularity has grown with the help of the mayor's office and a multi-platform advertising campaign.*

For many film and television producers, the pandemic was simply bad for business. But for David Katz '89, along with a colleague and the New York mayor's office, the pandemic presented an opportunity to showcase the city's resilience. And like many good stories, it started on the subway.

Often it seems the subway is a place where people avoid social interaction.

Commuters wear headphones or immerse themselves in their devices to signal the desire to be left alone. Those who ride with friends tend to group together, and avoid engaging with strangers.

However, Thomas Knox, a former Apple sales representative from Brooklyn, decided to challenge this antisocial norm, and try to make it a more positive, interactive experience. He documented the experiment as *Date While You Wait*, a video series that he published on his website.

Inside a bustling station, he would sit at a small table, adorned with a Coke bottle flower vase, two chairs, and a wrap-around banner bearing the show's title. He invited bystanders to sit and engage in conversation or play games while they awaited their trains. Fun conversations often turned into sharing stories and fostering connections that extended further than a simple Instagram follow. This social experiment of Knox's meant simply as a catalyst to bring people together soon gained the attention of people around the city.

## Date While You Wait in the NYC Subway

One fellow New Yorker taken by the idea was David Katz '89, a 30-year veteran of the television industry and owner of [David Harris Katz Entertainment Inc](#) and [EIFTV](#). Katz, who majored in Television, had known about the series through the press it had earned, and one day received a call from Knox, who got his name from a chance mutual connection. Knox had wanted to do something bigger with *Date While You Wait*, but other production companies had wanted to change it.

"Sure enough, Knox called me that day, or that hour, or that minute. I don't know exactly. We met, and then the rest is history."

They began pre-production for the next iteration of *Date While You Wait* in February 2020, unaware that the pandemic was about to lock its grip on the city. If New Yorkers avoided interacting with strangers during normal times,

the widespread fear caused by the pandemic was surely bound to make things worse and threaten Knox's operation.

"I had a meeting with Thomas in person," Katz said, "and basically, he figured he was going to show up to the meeting and then I was going to tell him

*Pictured above: David Katz* everything's off. But instead, I said, 'We're doing this, COVID or no COVID.'"

With the help of ample sanitizer, temperature readings, and social distancing, *Date While You Wait* continued, as did conversations with several interested New Yorkers, who perhaps craved connection even more during the isolating pandemic.

Katz's next move was to get the show on cable for more New Yorkers to see. He contacted the mayor's office, which operates the New York City Life channel, and pitched *Date While You Wait* as a program that cast the city and its residents in the most beautiful light.

The pitch worked, and the [new series premiered](#) on October 13. It now airs every Wednesday at 8:00 pm, and can also be found on the NYC Media App. The show follows Knox as he goes through his usual subway "dates," but also as he ventures into popular landmarks and restaurants around the city.

The 13-episode series has already gained acclaim, including a New York Emmy Award for a short video clip, "You Can Change the World," about the series. *Date While You Wait* is also advertised throughout the city in bus stops, cabs, and subway stations.

*Thomas Knox stands by an ad for his new show at NYC bus stop.*

Even though Katz could not have predicted the pandemic, he chose to produce the show at exactly the right time. Together, he and Knox have reminded a city of millions that after a year and a half of distancing ourselves, the subway—or anywhere, for that matter—is a place where people can come together, and be moved in more meaningful ways than just a ride on the train.

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