

## The Peale, Baltimore

*Out of the Blocks* Storytelling Series

Recorded by Aaron Henkin; Photographs and Music by Wendel Patrick

Produced for the *Out of the Blocks* website, created by the Peale, <https://ootb.thepeale.org/>

*Out of the Blocks* is supported by PRX and produced with grant funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Cohen Opportunity Fund, The Hoffberger Foundation, Patricia and Mark Joseph, The Shelter Foundation, The Kenneth S Battye Charitable Trust, The Sana and Andy Brooks Family Fund, The Muse Web Foundation, and the William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund, creator of the Baker Artist Portfolios



Kels (00:01):

These are closed burners. These are open burners, and these are grates. I polish them up and I clean all the crap off of them so that the gas can flow through properly. And they look nice and pretty for when somebody wants to buy them.

How you doing? My name is Kels. This is 2126 Edmondson Avenue, Best Used Appliances. Got the best appliances in town. Off the jump, it's my job to open up the building, to set up the things outside, grab all the appliances that we're going to sell for that day. I'm the first one here, last one to go. Before this here, I was involved in the streets, you know what I'm saying? I did what I had to do. I didn't take anything from nobody or anything like that, but I dealt narcotics. And that is what got me through to where I'm at right now. Went to prison for five years for dealing drugs down here. But in the process of doing all that, everything that goes with the gang, I haven't been through it. I haven't been shot, stabbed, none of that old stuff, you know what I'm saying?

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And it was this one particular incident. Well, I'm outside now. I'm dealing. So, in every hood you got some guys that go around and they just stick up, they just raw people in the hood. So this one particular day, I'm standing on the block and I'm dealing. So the guy come up, and he called himself pushing up on me, you know what I'm saying? He's trying to put fear into me. So when I see him, I give him money and stuff like that. So that didn't happen. So he left and he came back. And he came back with somebody. They started shooting. I started shooting. I got hit. They didn't get hit. That was a horrific moment in my life, you know what I'm saying? Because I could've lost my life. I got shot in my foot, my leg, and my side.

I ran from Emerson and Monroe all the way to Monroe and Lafayette, before I realized I got shot. I got to the gas station and I collapsed. That's the only way I knew I was shot. Now the guy that did hit me, he had got locked up. But I went to court and said that he didn't do it, you know what I'm saying? He came home and blew somebody else's brains out, but that's not my fault. Because at the time I couldn't say anything. I wasn't going to tell, I'm not going to tell, but I brung him home, you know what I'm saying? And then a few years after that, he got his brains blew out right there in front of the breakfast spot.

Speaker 2 ([02:23](#)):

So after you got shot by this guy, the court time came around and you had an instinctual decision of no snitching.

Kels ([02:32](#)):

No snitching, no snitching. I'm going to live by that. I'm going to die by that. I don't do no telling, you know what I'm saying? And yeah, I knew who did it, but I couldn't do it, because I'd have put myself in danger, my family in danger. And that just wasn't happening, you know what I'm saying? Now I have a different mind frame. I'm not in that lifestyle anymore. So I'm away from that. Got a job, and this is where I'm at now. And I'm here and I'm staying.