

## 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



Rishan:

Hey, Hey, Hey, I know he want to do something that boy, I know he will steal something. I know it. He just came to pay, like to look like to pay and just gone outside.

Speaker 2:

Does that happen pretty often, Ms. Rishan, shoplifting?

Rishan:

No. Not that often, but sometimes they do that. [foreign language 00:00:21]. My name is Rishan [inaudible 00:00:28]. Address is Mama's Grocery Store, 3322 Greenmount Avenue. 4.17, give me three cents more. Don't worry about it. That's enough. I'm from Eritrea, East Africa. And I came 1985. Hey, I

## 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*

never see you. What happened? You're going to school? You're working, making money. Where do you put all your money?

Speaker 2:

What was your inspiration for leaving Eritrea and coming here?

Rishan:

It was a war. A big war. It was bombing, killing people and we just have to get out. Why you don't go to school nighttime and work daytime? 1.50. When we came here, we went to school to BCC. For two months they help us with the rent and everything. After that, we just got it by ourself, we started just working. Thank you. Hi, cutie. Who is that? You have a baby, no?

Speaker 3:

No.

Rishan:

No, you don't have a baby. I thought you got a baby.

Speaker 2:

Tell me how you decided to name this place, Mama's Grocery?

Rishan:

My daughter, the little one. "Who going to work there?," She said my daughter. Me, I told her let's call Mama, that's it we call it. And everybody, they call me Mama. Nobody knows my name but I'm okay with that.

Speaker 2:

You treat a lot of these young kids like you're their mama.

Rishan:

Yeah. I tell them to go to work. I told them don't stay in the street. I just to treat them like if they don't have anything, we give them food. We give them everything they need and they look out for us. They say don't do anything, Mama, they say. We treat them good and they okay also. How are you? How are your kids doing? You don't see them. You say you don't see your kids.

## 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*

Speaker 4:

No-

Rishan:

You have to be good. No staying in the street though.

Speaker 4:

I don't know what else I can do, this all I got.

Rishan:

You have to show them how you do. That's why I'm telling you.

Speaker 2:

I see you interacting with all these kids and you obviously love them. You joke with them, you know about their lives. They love you. They call you Mama. Do you worry about them?

Rishan:

We know like three people, they came here got killed. It were 35th street and some they go to jail like for two years, one year, six months and they come out. They do same thing when they was doing before, but they smart. They can do better, but what you're going to do.

Hey, What are you... You working? Oh my goodness. I don't believe this. I never believe this, you working?

Speaker 5:

Better believe.

Rishan:

You stop stealing and you working now?

Speaker 5:

Stopped stealing [inaudible 00:02:59].