

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 1 ([00:00](#)):

Your English is very good.

John Kritikos ([00:04](#)):

It's not that good.

[crosstalk 00:00:04] My name is [Yannis 00:00:05] Kritikos. 4710 Eastern Avenue. It's a Greek place, Zorba's. Lamb chops, steaks, [inaudible 00:00:13] chicken, everything we sell.

Speaker 1 ([00:15](#)):

Will you show me your kitchen?

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John Kritikos ([00:17](#)):

Of course.

Speaker 1 ([00:17](#)):

Introduce me to the folks back there? All right.

John Kritikos ([00:20](#)):

This is pork, marinated pork. Taste.

Speaker 1 ([00:23](#)):

You just cut this off a rotisserie that's spinning over a charcoal fire, huh? Okay. If you insist.

Mmm.

John Kritikos ([00:32](#)):

So the amazing thing is that the charcoal, the real charcoal. We're cooking on the real charcoal.

Speaker 1 ([00:37](#)):

Did you learn from your family, your parents-

John Kritikos ([00:39](#)):

From my old man, old man. He teach me [inaudible 00:00:43] 25 years ago. The first day I came to be DJ on the music, and then the old man called me, he said, "John, come here. I'm going to teach you."

Speaker 1 ([00:52](#)):

So, you started as a DJ playing music here?

John Kritikos ([00:54](#)):

Yeah, I used to work in a restaurant, and then I came here to play music, and the old man called me and said, "Hey, you belong to the kitchen."

Speaker 1 ([01:01](#)):

He said, "You come and cook in the kitchen."

John Kritikos ([01:03](#)):

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Yeah. He said you belong to the kitchen because I'm living so [inaudible 00:01:05].

Speaker 1 ([01:07](#)):

What do you like about cooking? Why do you still do it?

John Kritikos ([01:09](#)):

I like to eat good, so I have to cook for myself too, right? The same way I'm cooking, I cook for the other people too.

Speaker 1 ([01:16](#)):

I can't help but notice you have Latino chefs in your kitchen. Can you introduce me?

John Kritikos ([01:22](#)):

Of course. It's Leticia, [inaudible 00:01:25], and they keep up my recipes. So, this the Latino guys, but cooking Greek better than Greeks.