

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



Evan Fields ([00:04](#)):

As you can see, from a glimpse, nothing looks wrong with the building. But if you stepped to the side, it's all burnt out.

Speaker 2 ([00:13](#)):

And there on the sign is your dad's last name?

Evan Fields ([00:17](#)):

Fields. Yeah. My name is Evan. I'm a Master Barber here at Geri's Beauty Salon. Address, 4710 Liberty Heights Avenue. My father opened a barbershop at 4704 in 1989. And he always tried to get me to cut hair. But I said, "Dad, I'm not working on Saturdays."

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So what ended up happening is, is the shop that broken into. Not once, but twice. On the second time, he says, "Can you just come up with me and just stay with me for a couple of days? Because I don't feel safe." So in the process, he had bought me some clippers and I ended up starting apprenticing, cutting hair.

Well, I worked with my dad probably about 13 years. And when he decided to sell the building, I ended up getting an offer from the new owner to take over the barbershop. And that's when I started running it myself and I did it for about seven years on my own.

One Sunday morning, I got a call from the owner of the building right next to me. He said, "A couple of buildings on fire on the block. You need to get up here right away." When I got here, it was five trucks in front of the building on Liberty Heights Avenue and on the side on One Oak. And I walked around there. And the whole building was engulfed in flames. And it started from the back and worked its way up top.

So even to the day, it doesn't have a roof on it. Storefront, it's intact, but move to the building. So all I wanted was to be able to get something out of the shop. Well, thanks to the grace of God, all my tools were still there. And I got one of the chairs out of there and my license. None of that got damaged.

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

What did you do from there?

Evan Fields ([02:04](#)):

Cried a little bit, said a prayer. And not soon as I said, "Amen," Ms. Geri walked up the street. I told her what was going on. She said, "Is my building on fire?" I said, "Fortunately, it didn't go that far." And she said, "I know you don't have a place to work so you can come work with me." And that's how I ended up at Geri's Beauty Salon. So I've been here a little over five years.