

## 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



Rayn ([00:00](#)):

My name is Rayn and we're on Glen Oak and Liberty Heights. I was born in B-more. I live around here for a minute. I worked in this neighborhood for 21 years.

Speaker 2 ([00:10](#)):

What'd you do?

Rayn ([00:11](#)):

I was a firefighter for 21 years.

Speaker 2 ([00:14](#)):

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What kind of perspective did that give you on what was working and what wasn't about this city?

Rayn ([00:18](#)):

When I was in Baltimore Fire Department, Mayor Kurt Schmoke had come to the City Council and the members of Baltimore City to bring forth a plan to save the city. He said he wanted to legalize drugs for health reasons, okay? Which meant that if he legalized these drugs, he could localize the disease, he could localize the drug addicts. He'd take the profit out of it, and now we don't have these black men killing each other over corners and drugs for nothing and colors, but the plan is not to have that happen.

So what happened in between all that? Freddie Gray got killed. We had a uproar. Those kids should be commended. They should be put up on high for their thought and their process. The organization wasn't there, but the thought was great. It was innovative, but we don't look at them like that. We look at them as hooligans because they burned down the city. Okay, so what? And Watson, the sixties we burned down the city something changed. From destruction comes growth. Every time it rained man, what happened? Something grows.

When I was in the fire department. What I saw was wrong was in this city was that they didn't help the black kids. My first run was an 18 year old black man that was shot in the back of the head, dying. That's Baltimore. That's life.