

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



Robert ([00:01](#)):

I've been selling sweat pants, dresses, jewelry. I'll be selling different things in there. Hello. This is Robert. This is 4732 Liberty Heights Avenue, and I've been away for a long time. I've been away for about 20 years in prison. Had to make a new change. And I met my friend of mine named Mr. Mack. He gave me the opportunity to run his little business right here. He trusts me.

Come out of prison, it's hard to get a job. People won't trust you. And Mr. Mack gave me a chance. He gave me the key to the front door and the last four or five months, I've run this by myself. I'm doing good.

Speaker 2 ([00:44](#)):

How old are you now, Robert?

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Robert ([00:45](#)):

I'll be 59-years-old in about 60 more days.

Speaker 2 ([00:49](#)):

You were in jail for 28 years. You've spent half your life behind bars.

Robert ([00:55](#)):

Yeah, in prison, all my life. I don't want to go back there.

Speaker 2 ([01:00](#)):

Can I ask what the circumstances were or the charge?

Robert ([01:02](#)):

Yes, sir. Attempted murder. Gave me 65 years.

Speaker 2 ([01:09](#)):

What was the story? What happened?

Robert ([01:10](#)):

We were selling drugs in the projects, Lafayette, and I'm dead wrong. The guy bumped me and I shot him and I paid for it. 20 years of my life.

Speaker 2 ([01:24](#)):

I wonder what kind of words of wisdom you have for kids out here who are looking at a possible future similar to what you've experienced.

Robert ([01:31](#)):

Yeah, I'll tell him about my life. About 15, 16 years old. Got caught up in the jungle out here. And when you make bad choice, you got to pay for it. You'll wind up with life in prison and getting life in prison, you're finished. No turning back. Your life's gone in the [inaudible 00:01:53], man.