

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



Fishel Gross:

My name is Fishel Gross, and I've been friendly with Ron Rosenbluth for quite some time before he opened up the pizza shop. And when he did open it up in 1984, I remember Saturday night the lines were out the door, because it was such a novelty to have a kosher pizza in Baltimore. I remember I was helping get this stuff in and out of the ovens. Ronnie from Tov Pizza's father was a very lovely fellow, and unfortunately he died young, he was in his 50s. And customary for Jewish sons is to say the cottage prayer for 11 months after one's death.

Speaker 2:

And it would very difficult to get out of work to get to those prayer services. So instead of going through the prayers, I brought the prayers here.

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Fishel Gross:

Ronnie, and I think [inaudible 00:00:50] at the time, created a 2:30 [foreign language 00:00:55] service so they could say the cottage prayer without having to close down the pizza shop.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. It's a beautiful thing to look through these glass doors and see a room full of guys in prayer in between stacks of pizza boxes and the Coca-Cola machine.

Speaker 3:

Well, that room was there for a party room, it's our overflow room. But people now know that that's where the service takes. In fact, people are very punctual. They know we're going to start at 2:30 exactly. And they'll pull in to the parking lot at 2:27, 2:28. And people who now have to say those prayers for their departed relatives, they'll come in at 2:20 and they'll say, "Are you sure we're going to have a quorum of 10?" Which we call a minion. And I'm, "Don't worry, don't worry. 2:25, they're, "Are you sure? Because if you don't have it, I'll look to go to another ... To a synagogue later today." Or, "I heard you have it, but I'm getting nervous, it's 2:26." I said, "Give it another two minutes," and sure enough, the room fills up. And it's been here since 1990.

Speaker 4:

[foreign language 00:02:10]