

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:

This is the best shawarma. We have the number one shawarma in Baltimore. One shawarma pitta, one shawarma falafal, please. Only [inaudible 00:00:16]. It's Kosher Bite, 6309 Reiestertown Road.

Speaker 2:

Two beef egg rolls and lots of duck sauce.

Speaker 1:

I have Israeli food, American food, Chinese, and I have Russian food. I'm doing everything. I'm not just chef cook, I'm manager here, I'm chef cook. I've everything, okay. But I like to cooking in the kitchen. I'm cook. I'm Russian cook. I was cooking from six years old. Okay. I am from Belarus, Minsk capital of

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Belarus. No history for Jew in Russia. Okay. In my country, where I live, I have only one [inaudible 00:01:01], one synagogue, okay. We don't know about any holiday, Jewish holiday, nothing. We know only p'tcha, because they send us matzah. We eat matzah and p'tcha, that's it. That's all what we know. Nothing else. This is why I'm coming 24 years ago, 1992. I learning Jewish tradition and everything here. I am so happy to be here.

Speaker 3:

Bite Burger, no onion.

Speaker 4:

I'll have a Bite Burger.

Speaker 5:

You want a hamburger with lettuce, tomato, onion.

Speaker 1:

Bite, no onion. What else?

David Cohen:

Oleg came here, I took him as a bus boy. He didn't know English. Okay. So he worked his way up and now he's running the place. He had tough times in life. I tried to help him out. So he feels like he owes his life to Kosher Bite. David Cohen is my name. I've been here 27 years. We have American, Chinese and Israeli cuisine, plus liquor, wine, all the largest kosher wine and liquor in state of Maryland.

Speaker 6:

Tell me what this place was before you moved here?

David Cohen:

It was a crab house. Mr K's crab. So I took it over and I changed it into a kosher place.

Speaker 6:

This place must have required a thorough steam cleaning in the process?

David Cohen:

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We basically remodeled the whole thing and all the effort goes into it from nine o'clock in the morning to 11, six days a week. Originally from Iran. I came here when I was 19 years old, I went to school here. I moved to Baltimore back in the end of 79. The history was that when Shah of Iran left, okay, we really didn't have any motivation to go back to Iran. [inaudible 00:02:54] time. So we had to settle here.

The best thing that I can advise anybody, to repent one day before their death. And you know when that is, right?

Speaker 6:

How does anyone know?

David Cohen:

Exactly. So you repent all the time. You can repent right now, one day before you don't know what tomorrow is going to bring.

Speaker 6:

Do you repent?

David Cohen:

Every day. So I said, I've been here 27 years. This was the first time ever I ran out of burger.

Speaker 6:

First time ever you what now?

David Cohen:

We run out of the burgers.

Speaker 6:

27 years you've been in business and tonight is the first day you've run out of burgers?

David Cohen:

I just missed it out. I had everything ready to make the burgers. But I made it, I made a hundred burgers right away.

Speaker 6:

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So now there's something to repent about tonight.

David Cohen:

That's Oleg's [inaudible 00:03:48] .

Speaker 1:

Where is the bill that those guys took?

David Cohen:

The bill?