

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/>



Mr. Hulk ([00:01](#)):

Might want to get a little fat? The grease is where's that. Hot damn! That's what I like. My name is Mr. Hulk. The main thing I come here for, on a Friday night like this? Cheese steak is my number one thing. He gives you a big, big, like 15-inch Cheese Steak Sub and he just packs the meat in there. Finger licking good. And I ain't talking about the Colonel's. Ain't that right?

Mohamed 'Sam' Hussein ([00:28](#)):

My name is Mohamed 'Sam' Hussein Hassan.

Umar ([00:30](#)):

My name is Umar Faruk.

Mohamed 'Sam' Hussein ([00:31](#)):

American Wings and Pizza. 2400 St. Paul Street, Baltimore, Maryland, 21218.

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 Batty 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. This program is supported in part by the Maryland State Arts Council (msac.org).

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Aaron Henkin (00:41):

That's the fryer. And that's the grill.

Mohamed 'Sam' Hussei (00:44):

I bought this business 12 years ago. People used to come from DC, Delaware, New York, believe it or not to buy the Buffalo wings.

Mohamed 'Sam' Hussein (00:53):

Okay. These buckets that we have, our buckets that we use and toss in the wings and add in the flavors to the wings. We got 25 different flavors of wings. This is what they call a honey barbecue gold 24K. 12 per ounce.

Speaker 4 (01:07):

We list off the countries, different countries that your employees are from.

Mohamed 'Sam' Hussein (01:13):

They're from Ghana, Mali, Guatemala, El Salvador, Senegal, Djibouti, Somalia, Tunisia, Algeria. I'm from India, Pakistan.

Mohamed 'Sam' Hussein (01:24):

The name of the place, American Wings. And America, United States is the melting pot. Like you help people from all walks of lives. You know, from different nation, different religion, different backgrounds, working in this place. So it makes it unique in a way that you can learn different cultures and different religions from different people. Come on [foreign language 00:01:43]

Mohamed 'Sam' Hussein (01:43):

Hassan.

Aaron Henkin (01:43):

Hassan?

Mohamed 'Sam' Hussein (01:45):

Yeah.

Aaron Henkin (01:46):

Hush.

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Hassan ([01:47](#)):

HA-S-S-A-N.

Aaron Henkin ([01:49](#)):

Where are you from? [foreign language 00:01:51]

Hassan ([01:50](#)):

I'm from Djibouti, East Africa.

Aaron Henkin ([01:55](#)):

Baltimore [foreign language 00:01:56] It really is a beautiful thing that this is the kitchen of a place called American Wings.

Mohamed 'Sam' Hussein ([02:05](#)):

And Pizza.

Aaron Henkin ([02:06](#)):

Yes. You know? Instead of United nations of Wings and Pizza.

Mohamed 'Sam' Hussein ([02:10](#)):

I Came from Ghana Capital City. Accra as a city within a city itself. Even though it a Capital City, I'm from a city called Nima in Accra. And this town, the Nima in Accra is one of the forest neighborhood that you find in Accra. I came to Baltimore and see all these people were sleeping on the side of the street? It was kind of mind blowing to me. You don't see those things, even in Accra. So I remember when I first came to United States, I had a habit of, even though I have good jobs, I always try to be humble. So I used to sleep on the floor, just try to feel what they feel.

Mohamed 'Sam' Hussein ([02:54](#)):

I recently bought me a bed about a year ago, after all these years. And I fast every Monday and Thursday, so you can feel how other people are feeling that don't have food. And I've been doing this for 15 years. Every Monday and Thursday, I fast. I actually, I majored in Business Management and Accountant. This isn't a have passion for this. You can make as much money as you want, but if you not really happy or have passion for what you're doing, it doesn't serve you right. And I have passion for this.

Aaron Henkin ([03:28](#)):

Hassan said something very similar to me, because he had the background...

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Mohamed 'Sam' Hussein (03:32):

Yeah.

Aaron Henkin (03:32):

... and he had computer tech stuff too.

Mohamed 'Sam' Hussein (03:34):

Yes. IT.

Aaron Henkin (03:34):

And he could have sat at a desk at a cubicle his whole life and been totally fine and have a stable... He prefers this too.

Mohamed 'Sam' Hussein (03:40):

He prefers this. Look at him. Working behind the desk, you working for somebody else. Working in the pizza store, you working for you. So basically, I don't think any job is big or small, but it's really good to have my own business. That's what I choose to do. And that's what it is. Like I've been working here in the pizza store for like 20 years. And we had couple of armed robberies and I got shot multiple times.

Mohamed 'Sam' Hussein (04:06):

So one time I got shot in my head and my hand and I survive. I was in the hospital for like 12 hours. And then one time, I was leaving out the store and then somebody shot me in the back. The criminal... Their crime don't have no address. They just come along wherever you work. Every business have a story like that. It's just... You have to be really patient with the people and you have to really be patient with the community, instead of just quitting the job, just because somebody's trying to scare you with a gun and try to shoot you. I'm not scared of that.

Mohamed 'Sam' Hussein (04:36):

And it's just, we're going to come one day or the other. I don't know which way I'm going to go, but it is what it is. This neighborhood is my second home. Like I can consider this my first home because my wife said I'm seldom home and I'm more remotely at work. So this neighborhood has been really good to me all the time. The neighborhood really support my business. They still love me. They still know me as who I am and they know me by my name. So this was actually American Wings and Pizza, but people call him Sam's Pizza. So they then named me as a Sam over here. So I'm just a little Sam. They just call me Sam. So that's what it is.

Aaron Henkin (05:15):

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I appreciate the time you took today. Is there anything else you wanted to share that I neglected to ask you about?

Mohamed 'Sam' Hussein ([05:19](#)):

Well, yeah. I just love my wife and my kids, and I want them to understand that if this is not for them, then it's for nobody else. I just loved them so much.

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