

## 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/>



John Gonzalez (00:01):

Today, I'm doing multiple things. I'm doing color. I have clients waiting right now for me to do presses on them. So it's definitely a busy day. Fridays and Saturdays tend to be busy for me.

John Gonzalez (00:14):

You see how shiny her hair is?

John Gonzalez (00:16):

My first name is John. Last name is Gonzalez. But everybody calls me Marquis. 2402 Saint Paul Street. It's called Style Lab Salon.

John Gonzalez (00:25):

How's this Christina?

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Christina (00:25):

It's beautiful.

John Gonzalez (00:27):

You love it? It looks really good.

Aaron Henkin (00:29):

This chair is the best seat in the house, right? You're right in front of the big windows. You get a giant screen TV view of a Saint Paul Street.

John Gonzalez (00:35):

Yeah. We're right at the light... There's a bus stop. So we get the light, we get the people waiting on the bus, and people just walking by. So we definitely get the views coming in here. Which is good. We also look what's going on out there too. Which is good too. Because there's a lot of characters on this street.

Speaker 4 (00:55):

I came to Marquis. My hair looked crazy. He cut it... I got so many compliments and I've been back ever since. I've been a fan of his work. All the women, no exaggeration... Everyone who walks out of his salon looks amazing.

Christina (01:13):

It feels so much lighter. I love it.

John Gonzalez (01:15):

Soft, right?

John Gonzalez (01:16):

Well, stylish to me is just... It means creating. Just being creative on someone that will allow me to be creative on. Like one of my clients when they allow me to just be free and transform them.

John Gonzalez (01:29):

What you see now is me making a style for her. I'm making her hair curly. I'm doing these loose drop wand curls. What I'm known for is healthy hair. I love to take someone who has hair that has been damaged, or is just neglected, and transform that into something that's healthy, and shiny, and grows. This particular style will fall... The curls will fall out and it will turn into waves. So she will get a different look the next day. As long as she maintains the style, she can have several looks.

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John Gonzalez (02:00):

One thing that I learned with doing hair, is that it's about customer service, first of all. So if you are a stylist that doesn't really interact with their clients... They don't feel any connection. So they can just go to anyone. But I feel like it's a blessing that you're in my chair. So while you're in my chair, I'm going to make sure that you feel comfortable, that we can have a good time. And it makes my job easier.

Speaker 4 (02:23):

I get so many compliments on my hair all the time-

John Gonzalez (02:26):

We just gave her some color... She's a color junkie. But I made her wait to grow the old color out. And this is her new, fresh color. So she's loving it. She's blonde now. She's feeling herself.

Speaker 4 (02:40):

He's right.

John Gonzalez (02:42):

I'm from New York. I moved out here. I got a job at a salon. I was up for an apprenticeship. So I came here and built my own brand. I didn't have a license when I moved here... A hair license. I didn't even have a place. I didn't have a house, apartment, or anything to stay in. So being where I am today is my biggest accomplishment. I have my own salon. I have a really great clientele. All these things are just a blessing. So every day I'm thankful for everything that I have.

Aaron Henkin (03:10):

What do you think has been your biggest challenge? Or your biggest hurdle?

John Gonzalez (03:13):

The biggest hurdle is where I want to go next. Because I feel like I've checked a lot of boxes and reached a lot of my goals. So now the biggest challenge is creating new goals... And where I want to go. Especially this year. I'm like, "Okay, what's next? I've done this." I need to keep it up. That's been my biggest challenge... Is what I do next.

John Gonzalez (03:34):

What you going to do with that? Are you going to pin it up or are you going to-

Christina (03:36):

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I'm going to hurry up... Get in the house. And then just try to chill out. And so-

John Gonzalez (03:43):

Let me put some anti-humidity spray in your hair. That'll help with the humidity. But it's not 100%. So, just like you said, get out of the humidity. But you're all set. It's beautiful.

Christina (03:54):

Thank you so much Marquis.

John Gonzalez (03:54):

No, thank you. I appreciate it.

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