

## 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/>



Aaron Hannah ([00:00](#)):

This place, people counted it out to drown, but Cherry Hill is literally that. I don't care how much water you surround us by. We are a hill that will always stand and it will always be bold.

Aaron Hannah ([00:16](#)):

There is nobody on this earth that's going to give everything for you. But it was Jesus.

Aaron Hannah ([00:23](#)):

I am Aaron Hannah .

Aaron Hannah ([00:24](#)):

You might think I'm crazy.

Aaron Hannah ([00:26](#)):

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

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I am the pastor at South Church in Cherry Hill.

Aaron Hannah ([00:29](#)):

I've never seen a preacher do all that stuff.

Aaron Hannah ([00:31](#)):

I think when you are believer, it should show up in your way of life and you don't have to cut it on and cut it off. It's a part of you.

Aaron Hannah ([00:38](#)):

When I think all the good that Jesus. You know, my feet get to moving, my hands get to clapping. My mouth get to open and my mind begin to raising. Can somebody shout a "yes Lord"? Thank you, for giving me my right mind!

Aaron Hannah ([00:53](#)):

Grace has freed me to be able to leap about God, to be able to cry about God, to shout-

Aaron Hannah ([01:01](#)):

Yeah. Then clap your hands and give him praise again. Thank you Jesus. You got to be seated.

Aaron Hannah ([01:14](#)):

I am 40 years old. I have lived in Cherry Hill my entire life. My father owned a clothing store across the street in the shopping center. I spent most of my life from probably 1986 up until two years ago, when I retired. I have my own barbershop for 20 years in the shopping center. The barbershop helped me to understand people. It's helped me to have conversations that I would never had ever.

Aaron Hannah ([01:51](#)):

I've seen people that have failed, come back to life all by encouraging words and then we were, this different religions. Like I, I was Christian, someone else was Jehovah's witness, other guy was Muslim and so you would see like a banding together, a common, a common thread about God. We wouldn't necessarily talking about Jesus necessarily, we just kind of let a faith based barbershop without even knowing it. And so we just kind of had a common ground by God and you would see men being encouraged. Oh my God, it's phenomenal. You would see people literally just out laying their particular ilks of thought down and lifting up God without saying, God, God, God, God, God. It became so positive and after a while it got so great that we start playing Christian music in the barbershop, that never happens in the barbershop, but it wasn't loud.

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Aaron Hannah ([02:36](#)):

It was just, it's kind of like Chick-fil-A. In the news, it was pretty low and it was just when you felt good. It's a reason why Chick-fil-A has it going on like that, right? You know, you've eaten there, right? And so the barbershop became the kind of hub, like a refuge. And you will see guys come in and they will literally close their eyes and go to sleep and lean their head back on the wall. And I couldn't understand why it was so much peace because my home was peaceful. But for some of those persons where they would normally go at, and do things, it wasn't that kind of peace. And so, to see these people come in and be peaceful and love and you know, digging your hand in a French fry bag and give me one of those fries and you know, men don't just share like that wish and French fries, throwing a piece of chicken out. You want some of this, you hungry, you should see these guys start caring about one another.

Aaron Hannah ([03:25](#)):

And when we go out the hood, cause this is considered the hood at times, the hood they share. So if I had a sandwich and I think you're hungry, I don't offer you a piece, I offer you a half. Like my guys, guys that what they consider to be street and hood, they give you half. That thing has allowed me to be a better man. I approach people with at least half of everything now. It's helped me in ministry because ministry doesn't always teach you to give half and so it's allowed me to now to want to give whole.

Aaron Hannah ([04:10](#)):

Look at your neighbor and say, neighbor, sometime you got to lose to win. Every seed sown is not a burial. Sometime it takes a difficult situation to be sown into good ground so something amazing can rise.

Aaron Hannah ([04:29](#)):

My deacons, most of them were people I met in the barbershop that I evangelized and witnessed to and told them about Jesus. And they became deacons and leaders in the ministry. And so these people are products of an amazing God.

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