

## 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/>



Speaker 1 ([00:01](#)):

Keep that hand up. Don't lean your head as much, just use your arms. Arms and feet.

Jesse ([00:05](#)):

Hey guys, I'm Jesse. Thank you for coming to American Muay Thai. We are at 7214 Harford Road, Parkville, Maryland.

Aurora ([00:13](#)):

If somebody kicks you, you automatically kick back. Or like if somebody hits you in your low body, then you respond with an uppercut, hook, cross, that kind of thing. So like, you automatically know how to respond to a strike. My name is Aurora. I went to see a fight. A friend of mine was into it and just seemed like fun. So I went and tried it out and got hooked, needless to say. So I've been doing it since then.

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Adam Droneburg (00:35):

How long have you been doing Muay Thai specifically?

Aurora (00:38):

With Jesse for four years now, I think.

Speaker 1 (00:42):

So we're going to go jab, boom, Thai kick.

Adam Droneburg (00:45):

Was your first fight in a competition, was that through Jesse?

Aurora (00:49):

Yup.

Adam Droneburg (00:51):

How did it go? Can you kind of take me through it?

Aurora (00:53):

It was really scary. It was super scary. You walk into the ring and all of a sudden it's like you wake up and you're standing in the middle of traffic and like everything's coming at you and you just have to kind of react.

Jesse (01:05):

Yeah so it was the first fight of the gym, of everyone and every time Aurora kicked her leg, just buckled her leg in. By the end of the first round, the opponent's leg was purple, how hard she kicks.

Aurora (01:15):

The only way you get out of this alive is if you hurt somebody. So that was a really weird mental thing for me, for my first fight, I would say. I mean, it's also really weird to, I think for women maybe more than for men, because we're told to not be strong and I mean, I'm naturally 6'1 and kind of strong. So I kind of spent my whole life trying not to be as strong as I am. And now I'm in an opportunity where like, I'm supposed to beat the shit, sorry, beat the crap out of this girl. Am I allowed to say that? Okay.

Aurora (01:41):

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So like I'm in this space that I'm supposed to be really intense and strong and like hurt somebody. And so I think that was the hardest thing for me in my first fight is to be comfortable with that.

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

You know she's covered in tattoos and you know, she's bigger. So people kind of expect her to win. So if it's not a complete domination, which is pretty hard, you know, in a sport where people are trained to fight, they tend not to give you the win right away. But I think she, a hundred percent, she got robbed. I don't use that term often. I hate when people use that term, but I think maybe two times out of our 40 fights, I would ever use that term. And you know, I think a hundred percent, it's hard to watch someone go train, you know, six, seven, eight weeks, everything they have and then to come around with a loss that you don't think they deserve, you know, for no real reason.

Jesse ([02:20](#)):

To me, it was so bad. I jumped up and I was so upset. My buddy at the time grabbed me and said, how you react now will affect the gym for the rest of your career, so make sure you keep your calm. So I don't, I that's the only time I think, if I could go back and if I had lost my cool in any fight it would have been Aurora's fight, cause she just did so good. And then all of a sudden to go away with a loss on that one was pretty upsetting for me and probably for her.

Aurora ([02:43](#)):

I think now it's easier to be more aggressive. They kind of deserve that. You know? Like they're going to do it to me. I'm going to do it to them. They deserve the strongest I can give them and vice versa.

Speaker 1 ([02:55](#)):

Boom, boom. Good, now come back.

Jesse ([02:57](#)):

To be a fighter doesn't necessarily mean that you get in the ring every day. It means that whatever you do, you give it a hundred percent. Whether you're working a job where you're an EMT person, you got to drag someone in and save their life, or you're a mom just simply trying to make a living for your kid. That's a fight. You're always fighting. No matter how you look at it, no matter what you do, every day is a fight. You have to stay motivated and keep grinding. So to me, what it means to be a fighter is someone that's driven and knows what they need to accomplish and is motivated to do it.

Aurora ([03:23](#)):

I look at pictures of myself growing up and how I was really trying to shrink and like not take up, to take up as little amount of space as I possibly can. And now I think I'm more aware of my body in the world,

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but also I'm not apologetic for it. And I feel like that's something I really, you know, starting to teach a women's class here, I really want to impart that to other female fighters or like women who are interested in training, even if they don't plan on going into the ring. It's like, it's okay to be strong, it's okay to be as big as you are. We don't have to shrivel up in order to fit into the world. You know? We really can be as strong as we are. So that's definitely impacted the way I live, I think in the world in general, for sure. Yeah.

Speaker 1 ([04:05](#)):

[00:04:01 Muy Thai training]

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