**Mishy Harman (studio):** Today’s episode is something a little different, something that’s been in the works for months and months— what you’re about to hear comes from our first ever live stage show, “Herzl 48,” which we’ve toured with across the US and Israel. Herzl 48 is an address— it’s the the Israeli way of saying 48 Herzl Street — and on the one hand it’s a totally arbitrary address. But, it’s also a really really symbolic. Herzl, as in Theodore Herzl, is the father of Zionism, and the person honored by the most street names in Israel— there are 54 Herzl streets, spread all across the country. And the ‘48, it comes from 1948, the year Israel became a state.

In some places, Herzl street is the main drag, in most places it’s a commercial boulevard, but there are also quieter Herzls, in more residential areas. And… we know. Because we visited almost all of them… Thirty-seven Herzl forty-eights, all the way from Kiryat Shmona near the Lebanese border to Dimona, in the heart of the Negev Desert. In each place we just knocked on the door, and talked to whoever lived or worked there.

There were many more people than we could fit into the live show, and in this episode, we’re giving you just a taste, but you’re about to meet a handful of those lucky enough to live at the most Israeli address. Without further ado, here’s “Herzl 48”, Recorded live at the Manhattan JCC.

*[Applause].*

**Mishy Harman (narration):** Our first stop was Kiryat Shmona, where we met Sima.

**Sima Muta’ii:** I just love this street -- I love it, really I love it.

Memories, my greatest experiences, growing up, all my youth, up until when I joined the army, they’re all Herzl street.

**Shai Satran (narration):** That’s Sima Muta’ii. She was sitting outside, on the porch, when she called us over. She lives on Herzl Street with her husband of thirty seven years. Sima began to tell us how they met in the army, and it turned out that their entire first month together was sort of an ongoing blind date.

**Sima Muta’ii:** I was working at the switchboard. He was stationed at some far away relay station. He called and asked that I connect him to his home. But instead we just started talking. He had a nice voice, and we talked.

I was just eighteen, you expect me not to be enthusiastic?

A man flirting with me! so we talked.

**Shai Satran:** After a month of just talking on the phone, when you finally met, did he look like what you had imagined?

**Sima Muta’ii:** Yeah!

**Shai Satran:** Handsome?

**Sima Muta’ii:** Not handsome, but… No, not handsome, but… I’m telling the truth. He’s nice looking but no model.

**Shai Satran:** You know, this is radio, no one sees anything, you can exaggerate, people just hear what you say…

**Sima Muta’ii:** Yeah, but no, he’s no hottie. Why lie? he’s a good man, a good husband, a great father - what more do you need?

**Shai Satran:** Nothing, I guess...

**Sima Muta’ii:** Listen, never look for beauty. If you’re looking for a good woman, don’t look for beauty, beauty’s deceiving.

**Shai Satran (narration):** Distant phone calls became face to face meetings, which in turn became a shared life.Like most marriages, Sima’s had its ups and downs.

**Sima Muta’ii:** I was alone a lot because my husband was a cop, and he’d be called up all the time, and I would stay home with three little kids. It wasn’t easy. Those were really hard times. And my brother was killed in the war; and that was was like -- enough.

**Shai Satran (narration):** Her brother was killed in 1982, in Tzor, during the first Lebanon War. And that very same day - Sima gave birth to her first son.

**Sima Muta’ii:** I gave birth at five in the morning, and my brother was killed at seven. Yup, just like that. I was in the hospital giving birth while he was killed in Tzur - Lebanon. When they reported his death, they came in to tell me. It wasn’t easy. It’s traumatic. Especially with a newborn. I came home, and was with the family, and… what can I say, it was hard. I went through some hard times. A woman that just gave birth shouldn’t be sitting shiva, it’s not a normal situation. Very unpleasant. I was young, only 24 or 25.

**Shai Satran (narration):** Sima named her son Nachum, after her dead brother. That just made everything even more complicated. Especially for Sima’s mother, who had lost a son and gained a grandson, all at once.

**Sima Muta’ii:** For the first few days, she didn’t want to come close to him. She felt like… she felt we had switched places. Her son was taken away, and given to me. It was an awful feeling, for both of us. But that’s what God wanted, it wasn’t my fault, I mean it wasn’t my choice. So I said to my mother: “You know what? I’ll stay with you for a month. I’ll move in and be with you, and let’s make a deal - you take care of the baby at night, and I’ll take care of the house during the day. I’ll help you clean, cook, everything, and you take care of the baby.” And I did this on purpose so that she would get used to him and connect with him. And that’s what happened. I would warm a bottle for him, and give it to her, and pretend to be asleep, and I would lay there and listen how she sang to him, and spoke to him. I brought them together, slowly. She could never use his name. She just couldn’t bring herself to use his name. She had nicknames for him, but she couldn’t call him by his name. It’s not easy, let’s just say, to call someone else by the name of your son.

It’s not easy. I mean, he’s gone! What are you calling him for? I don’t know… He’d say, “Savta, that’s me in the picture, right?” pointing at my brother’s picture. At one of the annual *yartzeits* we made all kinds of dishes, and food, and he ran into the kitchen and said, “Savta, are you making me a memorial for my birthday?” I mean he didn’t understand, he was still just a little boy. “Savta, you making me a yahrzeit for my birthday?” He’d say things that would scare her.

All the time he'd point to my brother’s picture and say, “You see Savta, that’s me in the picture, the terrorists killed me and when I grow up I’ll kill all the terrorists.”

**Shai Satran (narration)**: Eventually, things did get easier for Sima and her family. Nachum grew up and served in the army, where he fought in the Gaza Strip for three years. Today he runs a grocery store in Kfar Giladi where he has a family of his own.

**Mishy Harman** **(narration)**: We said goodbye to Sima, and started travelling south to Akko - or Acre - a mixed Arab-Jewish town on the Haifa Bay of the Mediterranean. It’s actually one of the oldest continuously inhabited places in the world. More than four thousand years. Everyone’s settled here: Canaanites and Phoenicians. Greeks and Maccabees. Romans and later Byzantines, Umayyads, Abbasids, Crusaders and Mamluks. Herod the Great built in it, St. Paul passed through it, and even Napoleon famously tried to conquer it... and failed. But today Akko’s claim to fame, at least as far as we (and Herzl 48 enthusiasts around the world) are concerned, is none other than Tzvika Gur.

**Tzvika Gur**: So my name Tzvika, my English not so well. I work a butcher.

**Mishy Harman** **(narration)**: The butcher shop is as old as the state. Tzvika’s dad, an immigrant from Poland, opened it in 1948. When he died, Tzvika took over, and now claims that he makes the best spicy sausages in Israel.When we asked him to put his money where his mouth is, he quickly fired some up.

**Mishy Harman**: It’s delicious.

**Benny Becker:** It’s really good!

**Mishy Harman**: Tzvika, I think you weren’t exaggerating. I think it’s true - these are the best spicy hot dogs that I’ve had.

**Tzvika Gur:** Thank you for talking… For the compliment. I work very very hard for this compliment.

**Mishy Harman (narration)**: We wish we could tell you that Tzvika is planning on opening a stand on Broadway. But it seems as if the American dream has been replaced. This, he told us, is the new plan.

**Tzvika Gur:** To give to every Chinese, every Chinese will eat one hot dog. So I make full my pockets.

**Mishy Harman (narration)**: At the entrance to the apartment building on 48 HERZL ST in Kiriyat Ata, a suburb of Haifa, just south of Tzvika and his sausages, there are two worn out sofas where you can sit down, relax, and get a good view of... the building's parking lot. Now up the stairs on the second floor, behind the turquoise door on the left, we met the Karrahs: Tali, Tzachi, and their newborn baby, Uri.

*[Singing].*

**Tzachi**: He just learned to say *abba* – dad – this week.

**Mishy Harman (narration)**:We began talking, and turns out that just a few months ago, 48 HERZL ST in Kiryat Ata was the scene of quite the drama. The neighbor from the third floor was an old, solitary woman. About eighty. Tali and Tzachi would always say good morning to her, help her up with the groceries. Things like that. Then, one day...

*[Singing].*

**Tzachi:**We were on our way out

With all of our bags

‘Cuz we were--

**Tzachi and Tali:** Going away for the weekend.

*[Spoken].*

**Tzachi:** And then, just as I start schlepping the stuff down the stairs, I hear these screams, yelling. Her Filipina caretaker… *(Tali starts screaming)* was going nuts.

**Mishy Harman (narration)**: He dropped everything, rushed down, and saw the neighbor on the ground, fainted.

**Tali:**AI AI AI AI AI AI AI

AI AI AI AI AI AI AI

**Tali and Tzachi**: AI AI AI AI AI AI IIIIIIII…….

*[Singing].*

**Tzachi:**I was shocked  
Didn’t know what to do  
She's lying there, motionless,   
Eh, she' probably fine.   
She’s turning white!  
What do I do?!?  
Then I stood and I said  
Someone call the police  
There's a lady here,   
And she seems to be… Dead.

*[Spoken].* But it took them a few minutes to get here, and meanwhile we tried to bring her back to life ourselves with the instructions they gave us over the phone.

*[Singing].* **Medic (played by Tali):**Push down really hard

Even if you need to break her ribs  
 **Tzachi:**What the fuck?! Are you crazy?!

Is that how CPR works?

Are you sure you…?  
 **Medic (played by Tali):**“I assure you.” **Tzachi:**Are you sure you…?  
 **Medic (played by Tali):**“I assure you.”  
 **Tzachi:**So I did  
Cause I had to step up there  
And bust those old lady ribs  
It was bad  
  
All this pressure, you know?  
But I guess I'm just great   
Under pressure, you know?  
I was born to survive  
Under pressure, you know?  
It's the man that I am  
I save lives when I can  
And I can, and I can,   
And I am!!!  
  
Push push push   
Push push push  
Push push push

**Tali:**Bullllllllshit!   
He's totally full of it  
I was the one who did the CPR on her.

*[Spoken].*

Conveniently, he doesn’t remember that part…

*[Singing].*

**Tzachi:**

So what did I do?

**Tali:**

You stood there  
And stood there  
And stood there  
And kept on crying  
“I don’t know what to do! What should I do?”  
So if you’re going to tell the story  
*Gibor gadol*, tell it without lying

**Tzachi**:

I guess  
I must have been stressed

**Tali:**

Every day I do his dishes  
Clean his clothes   
Grant his wishes  
Scratch his nose  
“Feh!” This fish is fried!  
So the story goes   
That I saved this woman’s life,   
While Tzachi cried!

*[Spoken].*

**Tzachi:**

Well, *almost* saved her life.

**Tali:**

Oh yeah.

*[Singing].*

She was dead  
Just like that  
At the entrance to our building  
At 48 Herzl Street  
48 Herzl Street.

*[Spoken].*

**Tzachi:**

Yeah, but… we still went on our trip that day, didn't we Tali?

**Tali:**

Yeah...

We did…

**Tali:**

We went on a picnic…

**Mishy Harman (narration)**: David Abeles , Sharone Sayegh and Or Matias - who wrote these amazing original songs all based on the actual quotes we recorded! We first met Tzachi and Tali a couple of years ago, when we produced the original Hebrew episode. Last month we returned to Kiryat Ata, to see how they were doing and tell them about their new Broadway musical fame. But the landlord told us they had moved away. And, sadly, also broken up.

Moving down the coast, we reached the city which is home to every single member of the staff... except for me. The words Tel Aviv and old don’t seem to go together. In the most bopping of Israeli cities, the one that’s full of every possible twenty-something around, everything feels young and new. But not Herzl Street. Not at all. Tel Aviv’s Herzl Street is actually the oldest one on our roster. It was built in 1909, by the founders of Ahuzat Bayit, the very first modern Hebrew City. A year later they adopted a new, more youthful name, Tel Aviv, which was a translation of Herzl’s *Altneuland -* Old New Land. Aviv, or spring, signified the rejuvenation, while tel, an archeological site, was supposed to remind people of their ancient roots. In any event, Herzl Street was its heart: The first official street of the first Hebrew city. It also had the city’s first shops, the first building with an elevator, and much later, even its first traffic light.

Today Herzl Street is very far from being Tel Aviv’s center. It’s a bit grungy, but still busy, lined with fabric and furniture shops. Herzl 48 is an outlet of a mattress company, and in the middle of all the hustle and bustle, people lay down and check out the beds. But above the store, in a tiny studio apartment with a balcony overlooking all the noise, lives a man whom - for all *The Big Lebowski* fans out there - can only really be described as the Israeli version of *The Dude.*

**Ofer Yosef**: Oh, that a big compliment for me. For real.

**Mishy Harman (narration)**: Meet Ofer Yosef, who just turned thirty-seven. Toy salesman by day, psychedelic-trance music composer by night.

**Ofer Yosef**: And Martin. Don’t forget Martin.

**Mishy Harman (narration)**: Oh yeah, and Martin.

**Ofer Yosef**: One day, like ordinary day, I was sitting here. it was like about eight years ago, I was sitting here with my friend, it was five afternoon.

**Mishy Harman (narration)**: The door was open, to let some air in.

**Ofer Yosef:** It was a really hot day.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** When, out of nowhere, a little rabbit made an appearance. Ofer looked at the rabbit, the rabbit looked at Ofer. He wasn’t even sure all this was really happening. So to find out, Ofer went over to pet the bunny, who promptly took off.

**Ofer Yosef:** And I was going to catch her and she ran out.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** Ofer chased the rabbit down Herzl Street, yelling “bunny, bunny.” Nada. So, in true *Dude*-like fashion, Ofer just turned around, climbed the stairs to his apartment, and picked up the conversation where it was interrupted. An hour later, the rabbit was back.

**Ofer Yosef**: He came back to the apartment, and sat by my feet. And I knew he is staying here, for sure.

**Mishy Harman (narration)**: Ofer named the rabbit Martin.

**Ofer Yosef**: And only afterwards I find out that Martin is a female, a girl.

**Mishy Harman (narration)**: But both Ofer and Martin were attached to the name.

**Ofer Yosef:** She’s Martin you know… She’s… I can’t explain that.

**Mishy Harman (narration)**: So it stuck. And they've been living together ever since. Eight years and counting.

**Ofer Yosef:** Actually yeah, when you say it like that, yes. That’s the longest relationship I have with a woman, with a female. A man with a rabbit. I think it’s the best relationship I had.

**Mishy Harman (narration)**: There are six floors and fifteen apartments at 48 Herzl Street in my favorite of all Israeli cities, my dear hometown Jerusalem. Most of those apartments are homes to large ultra-orthodox families, who didn’t really want to talk to us. The Sri-Lankan caretaker on the third floor told us that she’d actually love to chat, but her 94-year-old employer had just begun eating his lunch. And then, one floor up, we met this guy.

**Yaakov Tessler:** My name is Yaakov, Yaakov Tessler.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** Thewalls of Yaakov’s apartment are lined with bookshelves full of Talmuds and rabbinical commentaries. There are children’s building blocks and empty pudding strewn all over the floor. Yaakov’s 27 years old. He’s a Yeshiva teacher, a university student, a father, and most importantly, an American football fan.

And that was, more or less, all he wanted to talk about.

**Yaakov Tessler:** My father was always a Jets fan and sort of, we picked the Giants, I don’t even know how. All the brothers became Giants fans, and my father’s good with it.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** Now, there aren’t many American football fans in Israel. On the ‘Sports in Israel’ Wikipedia page even *chess* is listed as a “major sport,” whereas American football… just a “minor” one. I also like football, (I told Yaakov about the one time I went to see the Packers play in Lambeau Field), and he was delighted. It felt like he could talk about football all day long.

**Yaakov Tessler:** First glance, football looks like aggressive sport, but you gotta understand there’s rules. It’s not only hitting.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** We analyzed “deflategate,” talked about the Patriots perfect start of the season, and then - as I glanced out the window - I remembered that I had been here before.

Judy Stroweis was my first real girlfriend. And on our way back from a school Hanukkah party at the beginning of tenth grade, a minor miracle took place, right across the street, underneath Yaakov’s window.

I hadn’t seen Judy in a very long time, she’s married now, and has a family, but that moment we shared back in 1998 seemed *much* more interesting than more stats on Tom Brady or Aaron Rogers. So I said goodbye to Yaakov, stepped outside, and called her. I asked whether she could meet me there that evening. She said yes. I didn’t explain why.

**Mishy Harman:** OK, so Judy.

**Judy Stroweis:** Yes, Mishy.

**Mishy Harman:** That’s Herzl 48, over there.

**Judy Stroweis:** OK, hmm… cool.

**Mishy Harman:** Do you know why I brought you here?

**Judy Stroweis:** Ahhh…

**Mishy Harman (narration):** I wasn’t sure she’d remember. After all, it had been a while. But then she said.

**Judy Stroweis:** Because, ah… we then first kissed here.

**Mishy Harman:** Right here.

**Judy Stroweis:** Yeah, right here. I remember we kissed. I remember I was really excited, because I didn’t know how to do it. And I knew that you already kissed before.

**Mishy Harman:** No, no, no. It was my first kiss.

**Judy Stroweis:** No! You are lying. You’re lying. I know. You had ehhh.. Tamar, or I don’t know.

**Mishy Harman:** Tamar Arad?!

**Judy Stroweis:** Yeah!

**Mishy Harman:** Ah, that didn’t exactly count.

**Judy Stroweis:** Don’t try to fool me around, OK?

**Mishy Harman:** Wait, was it your first kiss?

**Judy Stroweis:** Yes.

**Mishy Harman:** And?

**Judy Stroweis:** So I was really nervous and excited, because I didn’t have a clue how to do it. I remember I was a bit nervous, I don’t know, like that someone will see us. My parents.

**Mishy Harman:** Looking out of the window.

**Judy Stroweis:** Yeah, it was a weird place, cuz’ it’s in the middle of the street, and you know, as you can hear.

*[A bus passes by].*

**Mishy Harman:** A bus is crossing.

**Judy Stroweis:** Yeah. In terms of Jerusalem, it’s a very crowded street here.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** As long as we were there, I wanted to know what she remembered about this event, which for me was really the most important thing that ever happened at a Herzl 48.

**Judy Stroweis:** I liked it, but I also wanted it to finish, cuz’ I was so nervous, I wanted to know if I was good or not. *[Laughs]*.

**Mishy Harman:** I remember it was wonderful. I was very excited.

**Judy Stroweis:** Yeah, I was really excited as well. Ehhh… You know, first kiss.

**Mishy Harman:** And then, in the fifteen years since, you’ve gotten married, and you have two kids.

**Judy Stroweis:** Yeah, it seems like a… Like something from another life. You know? It’s a nice childhood memory, with the hippie clothes, and the… My strongest memory from this first kiss was the smell of it. The smell of your corduroy jeans, or the smell in your hair. That’s what I remember.

**Mishy Harman:** I had long hair then, didn’t I?

**Judy Stroweis:** Yeah, you had like this Mishy smell…

**Mishy Harman (narration):** Ahhh… I don’t really know what she’s talking about… Mishy smell?! Anyway…

From Jerusalem we headed south, to our next-to-last stop. Just as soon as you enter Ofakim, a middle of nowhere development town about midway between Gaza and Be’er Sheva, you’re smack on Herzl Street. It’s *the* main drag. I guess that when the leaders of *Ma”pai*, the historic Labor Party, established Ofakim in ‘55 as a *Ma’abara* - or sort of transit absorption camp of tents, huts and asbestos shacks - they wanted the immigrants from Morocco and Tunisia to understand who the real big daddy of Zionism was. And ever since, Ofakim has been a town of immigrants. There were waves of Egyptian Jews, Karaites, Algerians, Persians, Indians, Romanians, all joined - in the nineties - by Russians and Ethiopians. Today about a quarter of Ofakim are Ultra-Orthodox, and I guess that given that fact it wasn’t so surprising that at Herzl 48 we found… a synagogue. It’s called “*Etz Chaim*,” the tree of life. Right outside, sitting on a bench after the afternoon prayers, we met Shimon Moshe Peretz. We began to chat, but all of us were melting under the scorching Ofakim sun. So--

**Mishy Harman:** *Bo Tagit lanu eifo lakachat otcha.*

**Mishy Harman (narration)**: Shimon invited us to his home, to meet his wife Yona, and their five children.

*[A car door closes].*

**Yona Peretz:** Hello?

**Shimon Moshe Peretz:** *Hine ze Moshe, Mishy, Mishy. Bo’o bo’o bo’o banim sheli, banim sheli. [Shimon kisses one of the kids]*. Hello my children.

**Mishy Harman (narration)**: He tried to explain what we were doing there.

**Shimon Moshe Peretz:** They came to ask us about Herzl 48, to ask us what this street, what this number means to us. They wants to see our family, to see my children, to see my wife, to see where I live, how I live, and who am I. You got it? Say yes!

**Peretz Kids:** *[In harmony]* Yes.

**Shimon Moshe Peretz:** Say yes, say yes. *Tagido* yes.

**Peretz Kids:** *[In harmony]* Yes.

**Shimon Moshe Peretz:** Yes.

**Mishy Harman (narration)**: It didn’t take long to discover that Shimon and Ofakim, are basically synonymous.

**Shimon Moshe Peretz:** I was born here in Ofakim about fifty-six years ago. Right here in my little town. And since then I live here and every now and then I went to America sometime, but still I came back home. To my base home. To my beloved city Ofakim. This is my mother-base, my mother-base, I love this expression. My mother-base is right here, cuz’ that’s the place I was born.

**Mishy Harman (narration)**: His parents were brought here in trucks. Like everyone else, they were tricked. “Ofakim? It’s five minutes from the sea,” they were told, “just a quick bus ride to Haifa and Tel Aviv.”

**Shimon Moshe Peretz:** They came from Casablanca, from Morocco. And then straight away they came to Israel, and…

**Mishy Harman:** What was Ofakim like then, when they first came?

**Shimon Moshe Peretz:** Ohhh… God. They were really, they were really down, they were really shocked. People who came, who came with a suit, with a tie. And all of a sudden, it was burning, burning hot. Nothing. Wilderness. Only sand and sand all around. It was a total shock! My home was like that, you see. The house was really really tiny. Lived there, with father and mother, eleven. Nine children: Six boys, three girls. No less.

**Shimon Moshe Peretz:** We didn’t have toilets, we had to go to the street. We didn’t have asphalt road, we didn’t have stone road, we had only mud, for years and years. It was, for the young, it was fun, for us as young children. But for the old people it was ahhh… it was unpleasant at all.

**Mishy Harman:** What was Herzl Street like?

**Shimon Moshe Peretz:** Oh man… *[Shimon inhales].* It was the one and the only one street. People summoned together, gathering together, and *Shabbos.* The only place with a paved road. Mostly we had carriages with horses and donkeys.

**Mishy Harman:** Really?

**Shimon Moshe Peretz:** Really, really, really, really. Like the nineteenth, and the eighteenth century in America. That’s what we had in Ofakim only fifty years ago.

**Mishy Harman:** So when you were growing up, when you heard the word Herzl, what did you think?

**Shimon Moshe Peretz:** Honestly, I thought he was mighty. A very handsome man, with a long beard, I thought: ‘This is a Jewish, he looks like a prophet.’ He looked like a prophet, he said things like a prophet. So like it or not, religious or not. God believer or not, I don’t know, but he was a prophet and he did some good things, that’s for sure.

**Mishy Harman (narration)**: But it’s not only Herzl that Shimon loves. Today, I’d say, he’s Ofakim’s unofficial mascot. Basically a walking billboard for the city.

**Shimon Moshe Peretz:** Hmmm… What I love in my city is that everyone’s cherishes each other. And we are very simple people. There’s no one here, even the richest or the poorest who’s not saying hello and hugging each other every day. Specially me *[Mishy laughs]*, I do it constantly, everywhere every… That’s why I’m the huggie-bear. The huggie-bear, yes. That’s me.

**Mishy Harman:** So Shimon, tell me, for people who don’t know, what’s it like to live in Ofakim, what’s life like here?

**Shimon Moshe Peretz:** OK, I try to phrase it in very few words. If you want to be rich, forget about Ofakim. But if you want to be beloved, happy, quiet, surrounded with love and warmth, oh you better believe it, oh you better believe it. Of course. Please America, comes to us. You’re welcome to us.

**Mishy Harman (narration)**: And it’s true, Shimon isn’t rich. Far from it. There’s no electricity in his small home, because he hasn’t managed to pay the bills in a while. But somehow, with his enthusiasm, he makes the house full of light. And he’s not unaware of it.

**Shimon Moshe Peretz:** Shimon Moshe Peretz is the happiest person in the world. As simple as that. I am very poor in my pocket. I don’t have a penny, I don’t have a dime, I don’t have a nickel. But I am richest man in the world. I am a billionaire, in my soul, in my spirit. Therefore I don’t cry, I don’t complain, and I’m happy with what I have. See, another person was a long time ago hanging himself. Hanging, no less. But I am happy because I know that I am down now. There is no more down than there. From here I can only grow up. Better and better and better.

**Mishy Harman (narration)**: Just before we left, Shimon wanted to share something.

**Shimon Moshe Peretz:** Many years ago we had an anthem of our little city. It’s called *‘Ofakim Sheli.’* My, my city Ofakim.

*[He sings ‘Ofakim Sheli’].*

**Mishy Harman (narration)**: We’ve arrived at our very last stop on the Herzl 48 journey. An hour or so south and east of Ofakim, in the heart of the Negev Desert, is Dimona. Now, Dimona’s known mainly for what Israel denies is there… We don’t want to get trouble with the military censorship, but let’s just say that most of the jokes about Dimona have to do with radiation… Much like Ofakim, Dimona was also created in the 50s, as a development town for immigrants from North Africa. There were thirty-six families originally, and they all felt screwed. It’s hot, it’s in the middle of nowhere, and basically whoever could, left. But halfway around the world, in Chicago of all places, there was a group that couldn’t wait to come here.

In 1969, about thirty African Hebrew Israelites, led by a steel worker called Ben Carter, or Ben Ammi Ben-Israel, joined the desert fun. Many more came later, from Detroit, from the Caribbean, and today, there are more than 3000 community members in Dimona. It’s kind of this surreal mix of gospel music and yarmulkes, basketball, veganism, and polygamy.

Anyway, when the group first arrived, guess where they lived… Yup, Herzl 48. Most of them have since moved into their main ‘village’ just down the road, but we asked the members of the Soul Messengers Choir to come back to their very first Israeli home.

**Mishy Harman:** So what’s it like coming back to the old neighborhood?

**Marnina Davis:** It brings back a lot of good memories. We had a lot of good times out here.

**Matzel:** Actually right in this building was the main bulk of the community, right here, and that was our square there. The courtyard there.

**Mishy Harman:** And, did you guys, like when you first came here, were you excited about the fact that you would live on Herzl Street?

**Marnina Davis:** Yeah, it was a great influence on us.

**Mishy Harman:** Really? In what way?

**Marnina Davis:** Just the fact that he was, you know, establishing a homeland for the Jews.

**Mishy Harman (narration)**: That’s Marnina Davis. And her late husband was a musician. She refers to him as ‘my Lord,’ but everyone else just calls him the ‘Groove Maker.’

**Members of the Soul Messengers**: ‘Groove Maker.’ The ‘Groove Maker,’ he wrote many of our songs. Yes, many many songs.

**Mishy Harman**: The ‘Groove Maker’?

**Soul Messengers**: Yeah, the ‘Grove Maker.’ When he starts to play those grooves, everybody gets tough…

**Mishy Harman (narration)**: So, we asked them to sing one. I mean, who can really resist the ‘Groove Maker’?

*[They sing].*

And, that’s our show. Herzl 48. You know, we often wondered what Herzl himself would have thought if he saw all the people that live on the streets bearing his name. And I don’t know, but I have a feeling he’d kind of smile in total disbelief. After all, despite all his lobbying efforts with European kaisers, Turkish sultans, and Jewish bankers, the utopian Jewish state he dreamt of, never materialized. At least not in his lifetime. But he was optimistic. The day before he died in Edlach, in Austria, in July 1904, he asked his friend, the Anglican reverend William Hechler, to greet Palestine for him. “I gave my heart’s blood for my people,” he said. It would be another forty-four years, and a holocaust that killed off a third of the world’s Jews, but at the end, a state was born. And fifty-four Herzl streets were paved. A big big thanks to all the dear people we met, throughout Israel, at Herzl 48.

And that’s our episode, “Herzl 48.” I hate to make you feel like you missed out, but the full version of the show has all these really cool visual and multimedia and interactive elements like nothing you’ve ever seen, plus a bunch more stories. We’ve already sold-out shows across the the US and in Israel, and now we’re planning more live tours with brand new live shows. If you’d like to bring Israel Story to your community, let us know by sending an email to [livetour@israelstory.org](mailto:livetours@israelstory.org).

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I’m Mishy Harman, and we’ll be back in two weeks with another new episode of Israel Story. Yalla bye.