**Mishy Harman (narration):** Hey Israel Story listeners, it’s Mishy. So as you know, we’re in the middle of our new series - **Signed, Sealed, Delivered?** - which is a deep dive into *Megillat Ha’Atzmaut*. If you’ve been following the episodes you’ll know that each time we meet a different signatory of Israel’s Declaration of Independence through the recollections of their closest living relatives.

We talk about the promise of the Declaration, the places in which we delivered on that promise, the places in which we exceeded our wildest dreams, and also about the places where we fell short.

And it is through these descendants of the men and women who - with the strike of a pen - gave birth to this country of ours, that we wish to learn something about ourselves.

But throughout the series we’re also going to be releasing a few extra episodes that examine other aspects of the Declaration of Independence.

Now there were a lot of firsts on that Friday afternoon in May 1948. After all, a new state came into existence. But one first, a first that is - as radio people - very dear to our hearts, was the broadcast itself. See, the Declaration of Independence was not only the birth of a state, it was also the birth of Israeli radio.

We’ll be right back.

OK, we’re back.

**Izi Mann:** The first broadcast of ‘Voice of Israel,’ Israeli radio, was at one minute before four o’clock in the afternoon, on May 14, 1948. Just one minute before David Ben-Gurion began to declare the State of Israel.

**Mishy Harman:** How did the radio begin? What did they say?

**Izi Mann:** The announcers… There were two announcers. They said, “Listen to ‘Voice of Israel.’”

**Mordechai Zlotnik-Avida:** *[In Hebrew]* Listen to ‘Voice of Israel.’ Listen to ‘Voice of Israel.’

**Izi Mann:** And the two announcers were at the same place where the ceremony of the Declaration of the State of Israel was held. This was in Museum of Tel Aviv.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** Izi Mann, a veteran ‘Voice of Israel’ broadcaster, and the country’s chief radio historian, is describing what would have normally been the highlight of any broadcasting career. But reality, it turns out, was a bit less... glamorous.

**Izi Mann:** They were sitting in the toilet cabins of the museum, because there was not enough place for them to sit.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** That’s right, the live Declaration of the State of Israel... brought to you from… the bathroom.

**Izi Mann:** It was a very small hall. Only the signatories of the State of Israel and the Rabbi that was there and a few other people were in the main hall. From time to time during the ceremony, two journalists came from the main hall to the area of the toilet and gave them notes saying what is happening now or what will happen later so they could say something.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** Everything about the ceremony, and the broadcast, was last minute. That night, at midnight, the British Mandate over Palestine was scheduled to end.

**Izi Mann:** It was a Friday afternoon. And it was held very secretly, because they were afraid that if people know where it would happen, Egyptian airplanes would come and bomb the place.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** A small team of radio engineers had been working around the clock to get this live broadcast up and running.

**Izi Mann:** They took from the main studies of ‘Voice of Jerusalem’ - the formal radio station of the British Mandate - each time they took some technical equipment with them. In one case, they took it in a convoy that went from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. And one woman pretended that she was pregnant, and under her dress she hided some pieces of equipment. And in Tel Aviv they gathered all these pieces together to build a kind of transmitter. They finished all the installations, luckily, half-an-hour before. And, of course, they were still afraid because the transmitter was not that strong these times.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** So as Ben-Gurion read the Declaration.

**David Ben-Gurion:** *[In Hebrew]* Accordingly we, members of the People’s Council…

**Mishy Harman (narration):** Many of the citizens of the new State couldn’t actually hear him.

**Izi Mann:** Some people say that they heard it even in the Galilee, although the transmitter was very very weak.

**David Ben-Gurion:** *[In Hebrew]* By virtue of our natural and historic right…

**Izi Mann:** Ehhh… Some people say that in Jerusalem they couldn’t hear it, but still people heard about it.

**David Ben-Gurion:** *[In Hebrew]* We hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish State in the Land of Israel, to be known as the State of Israel *[Applause].*

**Mishy Harman:** I imagine it was crucial for Ben-Gurion and for the government that the citizens actually hear the Declaration of Independence on the radio.

**Izi Mann:** Of course, this is the meaning of Declaration, I mean if you declare something you want that people know about it.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** And in a time well before TV or the Internet, the way people knew about things was from the radio.

**Izi Mann:** The radio in these times was really a piece of furniture in the middle of the living room.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** And that’s how... very quickly, everyone heard the news.

**Izi Mann:** The rumor began to spread somehow, and of course everybody spoke about it. People were dancing.

*[Hora music]*

**Mishy Harman (narration):** I’m Mishy Harman and we’ll be back next time with another installment of **Signed, Sealed, Delivered?** Till then, *shalom shalom* and *yalla bye.*