



Text Version of Audio Story: Six

When I was just a little boy of about six, I would walk home from school. And every day, I would stop at Paul Sellers' store and look at the candy rack and ask Paul, *"How much is this, Mr. Sellers? How much is that?"*

If a candy bar was a dime, I'd look in my handful of change for a dime ... and if I didn't have one, I would leave the store thinking, *"I can't have that candy bar, because I don't have a dime."* I didn't know enough yet that the two nickels I had in my pocket would have worked the same as a dime. I was just a little boy, and I didn't know.

It's funny how you see things as a kid. I was a little boy growing up, there in McAlisterville, Pennsylvania, and I heard people talk about seeing the world. And for some reason, I don't know why, I thought that to see the world you had to start from McAlisterville, Pennsylvania. I thought seeing the world was a car ride, and all you had to do was get on the road going out of town. And that, if you drove long enough, you would see the whole world, and then you would come back into McAlisterville from the other side of town.

I figured that no matter where someone lived, if they wanted to see the world they would have to come to McAlisterville, Pennsylvania — because that's where the world started.

I didn't quite understand why anyone would want to go out into the world, because we had guys from there in our little village who went out into the world, and they never came back. They died along the way in a place called Vietnam. I just didn't understand why anyone would take that chance.

When I was a little boy, I figured those men died because our town doctor, Doc Yoder, couldn't get to them fast enough.

When I was a little boy, I thought if you were sick, Doc Yoder could give you medicine that would make you well again. And if someone died, I figured they died because they didn't know Doc Yoder; or, maybe, Doc was busy giving medicine to someone else and just didn't have enough time to get to them.

When I was a little boy, I thought the best thing in the world was when my dad would bring home a frozen pizza from Bill's service station — Bill sold everything — and my mom would put that frozen pizza in the oven, and then my family

would sit around the television watching Gilligan's Island and eating pepperoni pizza.

When I was a little boy, I thought there were two kinds of people in the world, good people and bad people. I thought bad people were always happy when something terrible happened to good people. And I thought good people paid the police to go out and find all the bad people and beat them up and lock them up in jail.

When I was a little boy, I couldn't wait for the Sears Roebuck Catalog to show up. It was filled with all kinds of new toys, and my mom would give my brother and me each a pen and tell us to circle everything we wanted for Christmas. That kept us busy for hours. When we got tired of drawing circles around toys, we started drawing circles around half-bare naked girls in their underwear. That sort of put an end to the Sears Roebuck Catalog.

When I was a little boy, we would sometimes go over to my grandparents for supper, and I'd help my grandma chop the head off of a chicken and we'd have chicken for supper that night. I didn't think anything of it when I was a little boy. Today, I'd feel awful bad about chopping the head off a chicken, especially one I knew. I probably wouldn't be able to do it.

Some days, I'm glad I'm not six anymore, and some days I'm not.

I'm the American Storyteller.