



### **Text Version of Audio Story: Spielberg**

His dad rented the local theater so as to show his homemade movie. His mom and sisters made popcorn and served drinks. Believe it or not, they made a hundred dollar profit. He, the boy, like most of us, was a really insecure kid. There were a lot of things he was afraid of ... in his words, almost phobic.

He was a skinny little Jewish kid who, at times during his childhood, was embarrassed by the fact he was Jewish. At one point in his childhood, he lived in an area where his was the only Jewish family, and, unfortunately, there were times in his early life when he would have to deal with the anti-Semitism, the intolerance. It only seemed to add to his insecurities, but there was one thing he had, something that was all his. Anyone would have been hard pressed to take it from him. The skinny Jewish kid had a fabulous imagination. That imagination coupled with his family's home movie camera would become the escape mechanism for his boyhood filled with angst.

He spent some time, as he got older, but he was still a kid, with an uncle in California, and that's where the skinny Jewish kid would do something completely crazy. It was so crazy that perhaps the kid had a little more courage than he or anyone else gave him credit for. He loved the idea of being a filmmaker. As a matter of fact, he could hardly think of anything else. But what he did ... I guess some people would say he was delusional ... yeah, crazy. He got on the lot of Universal Studios as part of a tour group. But once there, he jumped off the tour bus and started to explore on his own. He found an abandoned room, some say it was a room that had once, but no longer, been used by janitors. He cleaned the room up and turned it into an office. He would return to the studio lot every day wearing a suit and tie. The guards at the gate got used to seeing him and would just wave him through.

He'd so ingratiated himself at the Universal lot that everyone just assumed he belonged. He was denied entrance to the prestigious film schools, but he wanted more than anything to be a moviemaker. He would go on to direct several television programs, including *Marcus Welby, M.D.* But his big break, if you will, first came when he was asked to direct the movie that scared us all senseless. It was the very first movie to gross over one hundred million dollars, a movie so powerful that the theme music still strikes terror into the hearts of viewers who haven't seen it in years. It was the movie that made us afraid to go back into the water. The movie was *Jaws*. And the director — the insecure, once skinny little Jewish kid, would go on to become a household name, would go on to become

the most successful filmmaker in history, would go on to become the finest storyteller of our time — Steven Spielberg.

Spielberg's ability to look through a camera lens and see things with the eye of that once skinny, frightened, insecure Jewish kid has brought us some of the most riveting, entertaining films of our age — sometimes humorous, sometimes deadly serious, touching, thought-provoking. Spielberg's films have changed our lives. He raised the bar for filmmakers, creating standards hard to match, certainly a big plus for filmgoers. Today, the net worth of that crazy kid, who commandeered an abandoned janitor's closet, is thought to be in excess of a billion dollars. But I sort of had the feeling that if Spielberg had to choose between the money and the passion of his life — moviemaking, storytelling — there would be no contest. We all have *something*. The skinny, insecure Jewish kid found his something.

I'm the American Storyteller.