

They said I had 5 minutes. 5 minutes. I mean ... I'm a thousand years old. How am I supposed to share my whole life in 5 minutes.

And sure ... I'm nobody special. Never did anything of note. But still, I'm in my 70's ... that's a long time to pump CO2 into the atmosphere and having nothing to say for it all.

BUT ... I best be getting on with it.

[breath] I was born - not dead yet. Obvious, I know but at least I got the big ticket items out of the way.

So ... I'm a post war baby ... my dad came home from Pearl Harbor in late '45 or early '46. I hatched in November '46. Heintz, our dog, nibbled on my toes ... we lived on Page near Goodfellow ... I didn't speak until I was 3 ... Don't know why. Not a "Tin Drum" thing - I don't think. Just didn't have anything to say.

Next, Virginia. The Navy again, the Korean War. For a peace-loving nation, we sure fight a lot of wars!

Racism. Holy shit. Saw it first hand in Tidewater Virginia. See, I didn't know I was supposed to be afraid of black folks ... or whatever it was I was supposed to be I quizzed my mom, pestered, she said ... she darn near jerked my arm out of its socket ... I was 5 or 6 by then - I just wanted some answers.

Our neighbors hated Catholics, which we happened to be. When they found out, so much for playing with the neighbor kids.

Moved back to the Lou in '53 or '54 ... Korea over ... got an apartment on Delmar ... stayed there almost until I was drafted in '69. Woodstock. Summer of Love. Yea, right. Spent my summer in the army, steel pot, an M16 ... as for love? Didn't want any of my brothers-in-arms getting too cosy - if you know what I mean.

Arrested, 3x, protesting the war. Worked army psych wards ... Walter Reed, Tripler - eye openers those were. Got out, hitch hiked to the west coast. Fast forward: grad school, newspaper reporter, Nixon - what a scum ... but Trump makes him look like a boy scout.

Reporter for the Salem Evening News - North Shore of Mass. Interviewed Henry Cabot Lodge ... whoopy! Off to The Des Moines Register ... back to the Lou. Met my wife. Cut my hair. Married. Took a job ... not just a paycheck but a J-O-B - nexr 25+ years in corporate life ... damn! Lived in the Middle East, Pennsylvania, Europe, two kids, both girls, both married, four grandsons ...

Hmm ...

Thing is - I love my wife, and our girls - that's what we call them - our girls ... and our grandsons - OMG ... the oldest is 10 ... as cute as can be ... some heartbreakers there!

[long pause - reflecting]

But, you know, I don't need 5 minutes. Like I said, I'm nobody. Never did anything any of you couldn't or wouldn't do if given the chance. A regular Joe-Bag-Of-Doughnuts ...

Probably sounds trite but I've come to believe a couple of things - 2 or 3:

- Leave everyone and everything you touch better for having done so - or try, at least.
- And our kids- they're everything. They didn't ask to be born. But they're here and we owe them. Decent health care, a good meal, every day, a chance to make something of themselves, an education ...
- And each other ... ya, we owe each other a lot, at minimum a kind word ... a smile ... a helping hand ...

Agus sin é - yea, I don't need 5 minutes ...

