

## Jeff Around Town – December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Jeff:** Time now for another edition of Jeff Around Town. Imagine a magic snow globe that will take you back in time to a special moment. Just give it a gentle shake and poof! It's now December of 1969.

You're a little kid growing up in South Omaha. It's a few days before Christmas and you've been asking your parents all month for a Christmas tree. And now panic is setting in. You keep reminding them about getting a tree. Your mom reassures you that it's okay, you're going to get a tree, but your dad says he's just been too busy and that he doesn't have the money just yet. He works at an office job, but also buys up broken TVs and radios. Then he fixes them to resell, you know, to make a little extra cash. You often go with him in his search for those appliances. He drives an old Plymouth Fury sedan, the kind of car that has rocket fins. Sometimes you come home with a car filled with TVs and radios. Your dad knows how to get a good deal. And yes, there's a magic that comes from your dad bringing appliances back to life.

Your small South Omaha house filled with TV shows, music, radio voices from far off places. But business has been rough lately. The house, extra quiet, and now it's Christmas Eve morning and still no tree. You worry that maybe this year you won't have one.

Still, deep inside, a flame burns like a candle of hope. You spend the day watching the snow coming down. One of those picture-perfect snowfalls. Your mom is baking cookies. A radio plays Christmas music.

Evening comes, and you tell yourself that even if you don't have a tree this year, it'll be okay. At least you'll have each other. But then your dad announces, it's time to go.

Finally, you and your little brother and your parents pile into that Plymouth. Still, you can't help but worry the tree lot will be picked over. The snow is coming down harder now, and as you pull into the Christmas tree lot on South 24th Street, your dad tells everyone else to wait in the car.

The engine is running to keep us warm. The window's fogging up.

You hear your dad's voice in the distance. He's talking to the salesman. You can't make out what's being said, and then you hear the trunk of the car open. There's a commotion. More voices. Cheerful voices. The dad and the man laughing. There's a kathunk on the roof of the car. What's going on, you wonder.

As you drive home, everyone sings along with the Christmas music on the radio. Your dad says nothing else. Your mom smiles. You arrive home and quickly get out of the car to get a good look at the tree.

Through falling snow, you see not just one tree in the trunk, but too many to count. And not just one tree on the roof, but several. In all, 21 trees. 21 full-size Christmas trees. Again, your dad, well, he says that he's able to get a good deal. You and your brother cheer.

Your mother laughs. Where on earth will we put all these trees, she asks. Our house is way too small. Soon enough, one tree is placed inside by the fireplace. But the rest, well, they go in the backyard, planted into the fresh snow. The backyard now turned into a magical forest.

Sometimes it's hard to keep that flame of hope burning, especially when times are tough. But we all have that little candle burning inside. A little flame of hope.

And that's another Jeff Around Town.