

Julius Wald

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Abstract

Julius Wald was born December 1, 1930 in Vienna to Marcus and Helen (Henny) Wald. He had two older sisters: Leonore (Lily) born June 6, 1925 and Mindy born January 11, 1927. His father's business was a concession at nightclubs, restaurants and sport stadiums. Julius describes himself as a mischievous child with pranks such as running away and spraying water. They lived in an apartment house run by a Gestapo landlord and a janitor whose son was a Brown Shirt. When Hitler came to Vienna, Julius' father was deported March 11, 1938 to Dachau and then to Buchenwald and was let out if he could leave the country. He had a ticket for the ship but not a visa so exchanged places with his cousin who was drafted into the Austrian Army. His father is presumed to be killed by the Germans and buried in a mass grave at a Yugoslavian Memorial. Julius' mother with other Jewish women had to clean the streets in Vienna. Julius tells how he wore a miniature swastika to prevent the taunters in front of his Jewish School from pushing him and calling him names. First his sisters were sponsored by an aunt to immigrate to Connecticut. Then Julius was sent on a Kinder transport to the US with 50 children by train and ship arriving in the US on June 3, 1938. Upon arrival they went by bus to a transit camp until foster parents arrived. He stayed with a wealthy family, the Leonards, in Allentown, PA until his mother arrived in 1940. Then he resided with her in Brooklyn where, at first, the children called him names. Later, he was popular and was chosen in their sport teams. When the war began he joined the Army illegally but discharged when it was discovered he was underage. Julius was sent home to finish high school. He got married and was given an Irish tablecloth by the Leonards which he still keeps. Julius hopes there is less killing in the future.

Summary

00:00 Julius Wald was born December 1, 1930 in Vienna to Marcus and Helen (Henny) Wald. He had two older sisters: Leonore (Lily) born June 6, 1925 and Mindy born January 11, 1927. His father's business was a concession at nightclubs, restaurants and sport stadiums where he sold candy and fruit on sticks. His father was a big man and a loving father. They had a small apartment for the five of them including a large bedroom and a small bedroom. His crib was in the parent's bedroom. His sisters were in the small bedroom near the kitchen. The large one faced the street. Their apartment was on the ground floor and there was a business below the large bedroom. There was an outside stairway that went down to the basement and the wooden window intruded into their bedroom.

- 05:00 The entrance was on the street with steps down to the basement. The ceiling of the entrance intruded into their bedroom. A one or two-man manufacturing business was in the basement. They lived in an old apartment in a residential area. Vienna was divided into districts. They lived in the second district. It was middle class or lower and mostly occupied by Jews. The address was 434 Gross Stacht Guht. There were problems when they lived there as Julius was a mischievous child. The bathroom was outside the kitchen on the landing of their apartment. In the hallway was a fountain with a basin and spigot.
- 10:00 Julius had a little nipple and he placed a marble inside it which he used as a water gun by pushing the marble back and forth to make it spray. Mrs. Fleko, the lady janitor lived at the end of the hall and was a nasty "witch." The landlord, Heinrich Muller, lived on the opposite side. When the Germans came, he wore a Gestapo uniform and Mrs. Fleko's son wore a Brown shirt uniform and wanted to get them. There were other Jewish families in the apartment house. A few years ago those who had lived in the apartment, contacted Julius to create a memorial. They sent him an email with their names. He was invited to come to Vienna to view this memorial of the people who lived in the complex. Some former residents came from Italy. He learned about events in the apartment house and wanted to do something so wanted him to come but he did not as felt he had no reason to attend. He sprayed Frau Fleko's son a few times.
- 15:00 When Hitler came, they took Julius' father and he felt it was because of his behavior but his sister told him not to feel guilty. His father was sent to Dachau and wrote him some letters. Anything important was blacked out. His mother went to Gestapo Headquarters every day with him along with husbands of others begging to let their relative go free. He stood in line. His sisters already left for the US. In March '39, the SS came over and spoke to his mother and took her to Dachau. She would not let go of Julius. He sat with the SS who were behind a desk with a Nazi flag. His mother was taken to another room.
- 20:00 When she came out, they returned to the Nazi Headquarters in Vienna. He does not know if his mother saw his father. His father was transferred to Buchenwald and told he could leave the prison if he left Austria within the given time. Mr. Krauss, the prime mover of bringing 50 children from Europe to America, came to Vienna and picked Julius. Julius would slide down the staircase in his apartment house. There was a narrow hallway outside the bedroom where there was a small cabinet and the entrance to the apartment at the end and a window to the backyard. He saw the iron man in the courtyard. Once his sister fell out of the window to the backyard.
- 25:00 Below the window were steps to the basement. Their bathroom was outside the apartment. They had a toilet but no refrigerator. They used a belly stove for heat and cooking. There was a nearby section that was high class with upscale hotels and parks. His apartment had electricity. When Julius was two or three, he had diphtheria. He recalls laying on a blanket on the floor of a hospital where a nun nursed him. He caught

the illness from a neighbor. He had a high fever. His sister caught it from him and was hospitalized with him. Julius was used to kosher food and was given ham and noodles and would not eat it. Julius had his tonsils removed when he was seven. His doctors were sympathetic and asked for more anesthesia which the doctor yelled for. Now he can't stand the smell of ether in his nostrils.

- 30:00 He opened the window and climbed out on the step of the doorway and ran away to visit a school friend. Julius attended Jewish School which was located on an L-shaped street. In the back was a park where there was a camp which housed and trained the Hitler Youth. Every day was a "welcome committee" in front of the school, wearing a swastika on their hats, who pushed and taunted the Jewish children "Jew, Jew, tell your mother that is good." The taunters were about 10 to 13, older than him.
- 35:00 He was eight. There were only boys in his school. There were about 12 to 15 children taunting them. He did not notice anyone getting beaten. He was shoved and he shoved back. Julius was told that he was too smart for his age. He took money from their charity box and bought his father a newspaper and cigarettes. He also bought a miniature swastika which he put on his shirt and showed it when the children bothered him. Sometimes they would doubt that he was a party member but, usually, he was lucky. His family did not know about it. You do what you must to survive. Adults did things like assimilating with them.
- 40:00 His aunt took up with an SS though knew it was condemned. On TV a guy points a gun at a woman and tells her to kill someone or he will kill her; it is the same kind of thing. He went along as a child with thoughts and later understood it. The Iron Man in his nightmares put people into cement statues. Between the two buildings in the courtyard was a metal suit of armor with a face mask and he imagined what was behind. His sisters would threaten him that the Iron Man would get him if he did not do as they wished. Then he would have nightmares that the Iron Man was coming after him. Julius' father was from Krisna-Putna (?), Romania and his mother from Belatin (?) near Krakow, Poland. She had three sisters and two brothers. They had a family farm across from the Pit (?) River.
- 45:00 His Uncle Joseph drove a taxi. Julius' mother took him in '36 to Poland where he met his Aunt Bertha who was married and had three sons. Her husband ran away. He thinks his grandmother was living at that time. Julius recalls the train ride through Poland as looking out the window was fun. The uncle met them at the railroad station and later saw him in France. They had family in Vienna. Three cousins in Poland took him skiing. They asked him if he wanted to go skiing and he knew nothing about it. He had to tie his skis to his shoes. They crossed the bridge and tied the skis on. He did not own boots but wore ankle-high shoes. It was a lot of fun. It must have been winter as they had snow.

The bridge was wooden and the railing was rope. It was not wide. He fooled around and fell into the stream and the cousins laughed.

50:00 They communicated although he spoke German and they spoke Polish. Julius heard his parents speak Polish so knew a few words. He never spoke Yiddish. His father spoke Romansh. Julius wanted to know what happened to his property in Belatin (?) and spoke to an editor in New York who had property in Lithuania. They were in the same boat. Poland did not own it but wanted it back. They thought they would give the property to charity but never found the deed. The property was the only reason for contact with his father's sister and brother. One of his mother's sisters got to America as was in business for herself. She had a bakery so had money.

55:00 They lived in Vienna. There were two sisters in Vienna. One was Josephine (Peppi) and the other was Nina who came to the US. Peppi went to Belgium and one son escaped to Palestine. The rest of the family – the sister, husband, two sons and one daughter- were shot in Belgium. A bachelor uncle lived in Czechoslovakia who was adopted by an elderly woman. He was a favorite as he brought presents. He was the youngest in the family. "Ziggy" was short for Zygmunde. He survived awhile and they kept in touch by writing Julius' father in Buchenwald. The father could not get a visa to the US as was under the Romanian quota and could not get out so he told Julius' mother to get out. They had enough money to buy tickets but no visa. The father had served in the Austrian Army in World War I and moved to Yugoslavia where fought with Miklovitz in the Underground. He was killed when the Nazis retreated as they killed everyone there.

60:00 In Yugoslavia they built a Memorial Park for those who were killed. The Nazis had rounded up all the Jews and were ordered to kill all they could. Julius' sister got information from the Red Cross that their father had died. He was in the US when he found out. Julius came to the US on June 3, 1938 but found out after the war. Ziggy corresponded with Julius' father and gave the information to Martin. Ziggy was in Bruno, Czechoslovakia and it is unknown what happened to him. His mother's sister, Josephine went to Belgium where she died under unknown circumstances, same as the Polish relatives. His father had two brothers and one sister. One sister came to the US before the war. One brother was gay so never married. He was a barber and was to be drafted into the Romanian Army. Julius' father felt sorry for him so did the brother's time in the Army and gave him the ticket to go to America. The eldest brother, Harry, died of a heart attack.

65:00 Max, the barber, lived with a widow according to Jewish law but they never married. Max supported his niece and nephew and lived with them in the Bronx. When Julius' mother asked them for help, the widow was nasty and did not want to help as she was living in sin. They needed \$100. When Julius' family first came to the US, they were not aware of the widow's personality as Harry was nice to them. Julius' sister lived in

Hartford, Connecticut, was married with two sons and a daughter. She came to the US two weeks before him and lived with an aunt in Hartford. They were financially well-off as owned a parking lot and one son worked. The grandson just retired from the Sheriff's office.

- 70:00 Their son, Sidney, was nice. They are warm people. His father's sister is good. His sisters cared for him. After Julius got married, they went for a visit to Hartford. His mother was orthodox and his father was in business but went to services. Julius attended religious school. Prada was a circular area where roads joined. It was a recreational area, a curved street with a bridal path for horses. There was a place to rent bicycles at Prada. He went to the circus at least once. There were vendors of chestnuts there. He went on two or three rides as was costly. Aunt Nina had a bakery and could do more to help her sister as had money.
- 75:00 Once he stood in front of the ice cream freezer and she would not give him any though his sister got something. They were not nice people. Years later they came to the US. They bought a small resort in the Catskills and asked him if he wanted to work. He was in his last year at Junior High and his mother told him to make a few dollars. He felt abused as he was cleaning, washing dishes and waited on tables and they took his tips. Julius received \$2 a week working 7AM to 8PM. The nephew played while he worked. Julius set up for breakfast the next morning after washing the dishes. When the aunt would not give him ice cream, he left and wandered the streets and the police picked him up and brought him to the local police station.
- 80:00 His family could not find him and went to the police. The police were nice as they sat him on a table and they sat all around and talked. They asked his father's name and he replied that he was Jewish and they laughed. There was a lamp hanging overhead with a green shade. Julius was around five years old. He heard about the Plebiscite and Kurt Shusnik, the Chancellor of Austria. Seis (?) took over after they got rid of Shusnik. On March 11, 1938 fire broke out after the Plebiscite. Prim, the Socialists in Austria have a symbol of a cross with a swastika. The Socialists were on the Left. His mother along with the other Jewish women were forced by the Brown Shirts to clean with gasoline the oil paint of the Austrian symbol of independence on the cement walk.
- 85:00 Later there was another traumatic experience when he went to his aunt's bakery which was behind a thoroughfare where the Wersberger Bridge that goes to Austria and Czechoslovakia was located. It faced a wide street and suddenly aircraft stupas dove and made a banshee noise that scared him. There was a Plebiscite where the Austrians were deciding whether they wanted to become a part of Germany. Most Austrians were in favor as they spoke a similar language and felt like Eastern Germany as if they were going to the Motherland. The stupas were a show of power.

90:00 German tanks came across the street and rolled down his aunt's street. The Armory was located near a richer area. It was a Casino where they had military training. There were two light cannon in front. The streets were empty when the tanks went through. Later when Hitler came, the people were cheering, "Heil Hitler" and flying flags. The Austrians were happy to see him. He was at the Opera in the First District. It was near the Prada with statues of Austrian composers. He sat on a bench and a man said to him, "Oh what a beautiful child, I would like to put him in the films." As an adult, he thought the man might have been a pedophile. The day after his mother did the cleaning, Mrs. Flecko's son put on his Brown Shirt band and swastika and openly paraded around and asserted himself.

95:00 Julius and his sister were still allowed to attend school and his father was still working. His father met Otto Preminger at a café and they became friendly. Julius saw the landlord, Heinrich Muller, in his uniform. They came at night for his father and took him. He heard his mother screaming and begging and his sister tried to console her. His older sister (passed away) was not as close to his mother. When his mother came to America, she lived alone in an apartment but when she got disabled, she lived with the sister in New Jersey for 10 or 15 years. The sister's husband had a bakery and did well. They were Polish refugees. They accomplished it with diamonds and sterling silver. His father was taken March 11, 1938. He was released two weeks after the sister left for the US.

100:00 Julius saw him for a week and arrived in the US on June 3, 1938. His father had been in prison for a year. He was bald, bowed and thin. The family lived in Stat gut as when the father was in prison, they were thrown out of their apartment and the furniture was put in the street so were stolen. They went to Aunt Nina as she had a large apartment but she abused the mother and sisters. They were treated like servants so found another apartment near the Danube. It was on Holanstrasse when the father was released. They went to a soup kitchen with a pot and were given potato soup and stale bread.

105:00 There was a cultural organization for registration of Jews in Vienna to get on the list for the US. That is where the Krausses interviewed Julius. They picked the brightest and healthiest children. One child who had been picked got sick so was rejected. A film was made of the children who were picked. A neighbor made a picture from it and they made CD copies. He met the Krausses and thought they were wonderful and kind. He cannot thank them enough. Their daughter married the man who made the film. Julius sailed on the SS President Harding and spoke to the Krausses there. They had a kind doctor with them and went to Ellis Island. Then took a bus to B'rith Shalomville, a beautiful camp for 25 girls and 25 boys. The camp was in the shape of an H with one way for boys and another way for girls. In the center was recreation and a dining hall.

110:00 The parents wanted to be sure their children would be safe. His sister was not part of the 50 children. The aunt from Hartford was responsible for her immigration. Julius did not pay much attention to events. The sister got off the boat and went to Connecticut and lived with them. The father returned but was not the same emotionally or physically. His mother had pictures of the father when he got out of camp and before he went to camp. Julius knew about the Nazis before and after it was an open story. He did not want to leave his parents but was told that they would come to America when things straighten out.

115:00 Julius left in mid-May and he was seven or eight days on the ocean. His parents took him to the train. He took a silver-based car with rubber wheels and his fountain pen for the train ride to Hamburg but someone stole the pen. When he got to Hamburg, he thought the ship was awesome. He met the other children on the train. There were two boys, one older than him who was standing in every picture next to him. He had a younger brother, Freddy. He does not remember who was in the cabin with him. He felt comfortable as his parents told him he had an aunt and an uncle in the US and would be with them. He had no idea that he would first be placed in a camp.

120:00 Julius was seasick and the doctor traveling with them placed him in First Class. He thought his father must have been crying as he turned his head away. Julius did not have any thoughts of not seeing his parents again as they said they would see him. The ship was later used as a troop ship. The camp was a holding stage until the foster parents came. He and another young man were selected to go to Allentown, Pennsylvania. As a child in Europe, he believed the streets were paved with gold. People drove a car and if it broke down, would buy another one so thought them rich. He thought that if you pushed buttons in an apartment, the rooms would change according to what he was told. The camp was beautiful and he never ate such wonderful food before. He arrived June 3 and around September he was picked up by Rose and Joseph Leonard. Julius has a book from their son. The younger son was 16 and he was 9. The son was a photographer and showed him his workroom in the basement and they became friends. He became a famous photographer, Herman Leonard, and has his book.

125:00 In the camp they had a routine of breakfast, exercise and games but no lessons. He picked up some English. Across the bushes was an American camp. A football came on their side from the camp and they tried to kick it back but you can't kick it like a soccer ball. He learned the word, "scram." The camp wanted the ball back and the owner said, "Scram." Julius saved a brochure from the camp. Many years later he took his children to see the camp. The young man and his brother who he met at camp, went to Oklahoma. One of the girls was taken to Florida and he later met her at the presentation of the film at his Temple. They did not remember each other and did not recognize each other in the photos. All the children were Austrian. They had not seen each other much on the ship.

They had soirees. The girls had dance lessons and the boys played on the field. Julius does not recall the staff. He wrote his sisters.

130:00 His Uncle Max visited him. He had a photo of him so he recognized him. Max was good to him and Julius liked him. He came alone and slipped Julius a dollar or two. He never saw him again. After camp, Julius went to the Bronx. Then he went to Allentown where he was picked up by Mrs. Leonard, a society lady who ran the show. She was refined and generous. Her husband owned a factory that manufactured corsets. They were millionaires in '39. Julius was not shocked as this was what he was told. They had a Cadillac, a 2-car garage and house, a chauffeur, butler, maid and cook. When he dined there, it was formal with a tie and the table set with silverware. It was accepted as normal in the US but culture shock for Julius. He had his own room upstairs. There was a laundry shoot down to the basement and he took a ride down. He was admonished in case it was full.

135:00 There were two sons and a daughter. The eldest son was Ira and the daughter was Frances whose husband wrote, "Those were the days." They were all good people and successful. They presumed he would stay until his parents arrived. He wrote his parents. Later, when he married, the family gave him an Irish tablecloth which he still saves. When his children were five and eight, he took them to Allentown. Mr. Leonard had died and they had sold the house to the President of the University. Julius' mother came in 1940 and his father went to Yugoslavia. Ninety days had passed and his father did not leave so he was threatened to be taken in chains so left.

140:00 His mother came to Allentown and then stayed with Aunt Nina, the mean sister. Kurt's parents stayed in Allentown and put him through college. They had a nice life and are still there. Julius went to Brooklyn and had a culture shock. He knew the way the Leonards lived was not normal. He went through 3rd, 4th and 5th grades in one year. He knew what other people were like as he visited them at Christmas. Eventually he accepted Brooklyn for what it was. He was an object of abuse. The children would tell him to stay a few days if he likes this country. Each nationality was called names. They were middle class and of all nationalities and races in East New York. They were abusive to minorities. There were two schools: Nuremburg and Jackson. He had friends at each. He played in the school yard. Both schools wanted him as he was a good kicker as had been a soccer player.

145:00 To keep the peace, he played half the time with one team and half the time with the other. The three Raven brothers were great friends and he spent Christmas there. His mother got her own apartment. Nina bought a house as she had money. He asked his mother to live in Allentown but she refused as she had a job in a sweatshop. First he visited Allentown and returned to finish the school year and did not want to return to Brooklyn. Mr. Leonard was very nice and polite, laid back and was "old money." He would sit in

the living room reading and smoking his cigar. Mrs. Leonard was outgoing. Julius lived with his mother in her top floor apartment. The landlady's daughter was not happy as he did not talk nicely to her. Then they moved a mile away to another apartment in an apartment house on the top floor. It was a block from the Russian Orthodox Church. Mr. Levinsky who now lives on the other side of this county, lived near the church. Julius had no choice but remain there.

150:00 Years ago people moved around a lot. They lived on Blake Avenue which was a busy neighborhood and then moved ten blocks away to a private house. His mother did the best she could. She always worked in sweat shops. The people who ran them cheated the workers. They did piecework by the bundle. Now Koreans work in the sweatshops who were preceded by the Chinese. You will always find immigrants who come here and do not know English. His sisters came from Hartford which they preferred. His Cousin Sydney had a brother in aircraft who died young from a heart condition. The cousin had died on his honeymoon. The wife remarried and curses Julius' wife for not attending but she had just given birth.

155:00 Julius joined the Army in '45 as he was against the Germans. He went to Allentown and got a room at the YMHA and went to the Draft Board. He claimed he was 18 and was drafted. Julius was not shipped to Europe. He spoke German and was trained to be a translator. He was sent to Camp Richie in Maryland. Julius gave his aunt's address instead of his own. He did not tell his family what he did. They notified the aunt that he was drafted and she told his mother who then told the authorities that he was underage. He was called to the commander and the Sergeant said, "Boy, you're in big trouble." When he had sunstroke, he had an indiscretion with the Lieutenant Nurse and thought he was being called in for that. The Lieutenant, Ralph Urdu from Rockland Center, NY, had a grin on his face and shows Julius a teletype from DC and says, "What the hell are you crazy?" They found out his age and said he was going home to his mamma. He had had practice sessions with the POW. The Tech running it showed him how to do it, especially in winter. You have them stand in a bucket of water and that will make them talk.

160:00 He returned home to Brooklyn by train. He returned to high school where he was a big shot as had been in the Army. He felt he was between the students and the teachers. His sister was at the same school. Mini was a brain and got awards. An Irish teacher took him under her wings because of his sister and said, "Come on Julius, you can do better." He was not the best behaved. He talked back if he thought the teacher was wrong. The Guidance Counselor gave him a lecture and Julius told him to get off. His mother asked why he went into the Army but she could not control him. Abby was the older sister. The family was on welfare and he had to get a job. He worked in a drug store and cleaned what they compounded and washed the floors and received \$3 a week. He

worked from 3:30 to 5:00. His mother would not allow him to work on Saturday so he lost the job.

165:00 The Leonards kept in touch. When the daughter got married, she moved to New York. Her husband wrote a song. He saw Ira a half dozen times. He is building a house next to his as he owns a large piece of property. Albert was a world traveler. He did not see the Krausses who lived in Philadelphia. Julius felt bad as he owed them his life. He was not close to the children except for the guy who stayed with him at the Leonards but they did not like each other. Julius knew his father went to Yugoslavia but there was no trace of him. His father had mentioned Nice. He saw Ziggy four or five years ago. His sister has specific information. He heard his father got killed by the Nazis in retreat and they buried him in a mass grave. The Memorial they built is a mass grave for Jews who died from '42 to '44. He has no proof. Family members in Belgium, Poland and Czechoslovakia did not make it but he did.

170:00 He lets his mind wander and like a bad dream, wakes up and realizes, “The more things change, the more they stay the same.” The world did not change as seen in Cambodia and Syria. When he thinks of that, Julius is glad he will leave the world but sorry his children must see this. People run to Syria and kill for no reason and claim they do this in the name of religion but religion does not teach that. In the Jewish Bible, they talk of killing but much of that is fiction. It is unbelievable that G-d came down and wrote the Bible but it was by Humanists who believe people are people. It was written by people. If you just change one word, it makes all the difference—from “Thou shalt not kill” to “thou will kill.” People should be like the current Pope, a Humanist who interacts with one another. Julius hopes and prays that someone sees this and changes their view—if only one person changes. Thank you.

174:00