

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:00,520

2  
00:00:00,520 --> 00:00:01,020  
Here we go.

3  
00:00:01,020 --> 00:00:03,620  
Cameras rolling at speed.

4  
00:00:03,620 --> 00:00:07,040  
This is a United States  
Holocaust Memorial Museum

5  
00:00:07,040 --> 00:00:13,310  
interview with Wendy Muchman  
on September 27, 2016

6  
00:00:13,310 --> 00:00:15,440  
in Chicago, Illinois.

7  
00:00:15,440 --> 00:00:17,810  
Wendy, thank you so  
much for taking part

8  
00:00:17,810 --> 00:00:21,440  
in this interview today,  
which is a little unusual.

9  
00:00:21,440 --> 00:00:25,100  
It's not our usual kind  
of oral history interview.

10  
00:00:25,100 --> 00:00:27,890  
But we've got an  
unusual situation today,

11  
00:00:27,890 --> 00:00:32,930  
and we'll be speaking not only  
with you, but with your mother,

12  
00:00:32,930 --> 00:00:35,900

and with your newfound relative.

13

00:00:35,900 --> 00:00:40,190

And so it's part of a story,  
and it's one of the few

14

00:00:40,190 --> 00:00:44,090

that has perhaps a happy  
end or a bittersweet end.

15

00:00:44,090 --> 00:00:47,300

So as before, in  
saying these things,

16

00:00:47,300 --> 00:00:50,975

I'm kind of leading people on.

17

00:00:50,975 --> 00:00:52,850

They don't know what  
we're talking about yet,

18

00:00:52,850 --> 00:00:54,310

but they soon will.

19

00:00:54,310 --> 00:00:56,480

So let's start at the beginning.

20

00:00:56,480 --> 00:00:59,960

And I'm going to ask a  
few questions about you,

21

00:00:59,960 --> 00:01:01,640

and then we'll  
take it from there.

22

00:01:01,640 --> 00:01:02,330

OK.

23

00:01:02,330 --> 00:01:05,069

So Wendy, tell me,  
where were you born?

24

00:01:05,069 --> 00:01:07,550

I was actually born  
in Lawton, Oklahoma,

25

00:01:07,550 --> 00:01:11,440

where my mom and dad lived when  
my dad was in the army there.

26

00:01:11,440 --> 00:01:12,320

OK.

27

00:01:12,320 --> 00:01:13,710

And what year was this?

28

00:01:13,710 --> 00:01:15,060

1956.

29

00:01:15,060 --> 00:01:17,150

So you're a post-war baby.

30

00:01:17,150 --> 00:01:17,720

Yes.

31

00:01:17,720 --> 00:01:18,500

OK.

32

00:01:18,500 --> 00:01:21,740

And tell me about your  
mother and your father.

33

00:01:21,740 --> 00:01:23,840

Who is your father and  
who is your mother?

34

00:01:23,840 --> 00:01:27,230

So my father was Irwin Muchman.

35

00:01:27,230 --> 00:01:31,130

He was born in Chicago in 1933.

36

00:01:31,130 --> 00:01:37,790

And my mother is Beatrice

Westheimer Lewy Muchman,

37  
00:01:37,790 --> 00:01:41,910  
who was born in Berlin,  
Germany in 1933.

38  
00:01:41,910 --> 00:01:43,850  
So your father is American?

39  
00:01:43,850 --> 00:01:44,510  
Yes.

40  
00:01:44,510 --> 00:01:46,370  
And your mother is European.

41  
00:01:46,370 --> 00:01:47,040  
Yes.

42  
00:01:47,040 --> 00:01:47,990  
OK.

43  
00:01:47,990 --> 00:01:49,250  
And they both are Jewish?

44  
00:01:49,250 --> 00:01:49,910  
Yes.

45  
00:01:49,910 --> 00:01:51,080  
OK.

46  
00:01:51,080 --> 00:01:53,060  
How did your parents meet?

47  
00:01:53,060 --> 00:01:57,290  
My parents met in college  
at University of Illinois

48  
00:01:57,290 --> 00:01:59,610  
and were college sweethearts.

49  
00:01:59,610 --> 00:02:03,380

And my mom who had, well,  
they'll hear that story later,

50  
00:02:03,380 --> 00:02:07,580  
but my mom who had  
come here from Germany

51  
00:02:07,580 --> 00:02:13,250  
just loved my dad and his  
Russian Jewish family.

52  
00:02:13,250 --> 00:02:16,040  
And they took her  
in with open arms,

53  
00:02:16,040 --> 00:02:18,260  
and they were  
college sweethearts

54  
00:02:18,260 --> 00:02:24,206  
and were married, boy, I have  
to figure out, married in '54

55  
00:02:24,206 --> 00:02:25,550  
or '55.

56  
00:02:25,550 --> 00:02:27,050  
She'll know precisely.

57  
00:02:27,050 --> 00:02:35,060  
So and then they had me in '56  
and my brother, Robbie Muchman,

58  
00:02:35,060 --> 00:02:39,650  
who's not alive  
anymore, in 1958.

59  
00:02:39,650 --> 00:02:43,070  
My brother was killed  
later in an accident

60  
00:02:43,070 --> 00:02:46,400  
where we were hit by a drunk

driver, my only brother.

61  
00:02:46,400 --> 00:02:48,530  
My brother, too.

62  
00:02:48,530 --> 00:02:49,320  
That's a loss.

63  
00:02:49,320 --> 00:02:49,820  
Huge.

64  
00:02:49,820 --> 00:02:53,030

65  
00:02:53,030 --> 00:02:56,570  
You say your father's side of  
the family were Russian Jewish.

66  
00:02:56,570 --> 00:03:01,100  
So when had they emigrated  
to the United States?

67  
00:03:01,100 --> 00:03:05,930  
So my grandma, Anita  
Muchman, was born literally

68  
00:03:05,930 --> 00:03:08,210  
on the boat over.

69  
00:03:08,210 --> 00:03:12,290  
And my grandfather's  
family I know less about,

70  
00:03:12,290 --> 00:03:15,110  
because he died when  
I was very young.

71  
00:03:15,110 --> 00:03:19,415  
But it's my understanding  
he came over.

72  
00:03:19,415 --> 00:03:21,980

73

00:03:21,980 --> 00:03:23,360

He might have been born here.

74

00:03:23,360 --> 00:03:25,130

My mom can clarify that.

75

00:03:25,130 --> 00:03:27,050

I think he was born here.

76

00:03:27,050 --> 00:03:28,220

He fought in the war.

77

00:03:28,220 --> 00:03:30,800

He won the Purple Heart, but  
he fought for the Americans.

78

00:03:30,800 --> 00:03:32,510

He fought in the  
First World War.

79

00:03:32,510 --> 00:03:34,700

So my grandfather was born here.

80

00:03:34,700 --> 00:03:39,250

And his family was from  
somewhere in Poland.

81

00:03:39,250 --> 00:03:42,970

So it would be safe to say  
that when they came over

82

00:03:42,970 --> 00:03:44,980

to the United  
States, it was part

83

00:03:44,980 --> 00:03:51,310

of that huge wave of immigration  
from the late 19th, early 20th

84

00:03:51,310 --> 00:03:52,150

century?

85

00:03:52,150 --> 00:03:53,080

Yes.

86

00:03:53,080 --> 00:03:53,950

My dad's family.

87

00:03:53,950 --> 00:03:54,730

That's from your father's  
side of the family.

88

00:03:54,730 --> 00:03:55,230

Yes.

89

00:03:55,230 --> 00:03:56,410

And what about your mom?

90

00:03:56,410 --> 00:03:59,980

So my mom came over  
with her grandmother

91

00:03:59,980 --> 00:04:04,840

after surviving as a hidden  
child in a little village

92

00:04:04,840 --> 00:04:07,120

in Belgium called Ottignies.

93

00:04:07,120 --> 00:04:08,590

And this was which war?

94

00:04:08,590 --> 00:04:10,200

Second World War, sorry.

95

00:04:10,200 --> 00:04:10,900

OK.

96

00:04:10,900 --> 00:04:13,870

So she is a refugee  
from World War II.



97

00:04:13,870 --> 00:04:14,950

Yes.

98

00:04:14,950 --> 00:04:16,920

OK.

99

00:04:16,920 --> 00:04:22,860

And how much of your mom's  
story and how much of your dad's

100

00:04:22,860 --> 00:04:26,680

side of the family were  
you familiar with as you

101

00:04:26,680 --> 00:04:28,710

were growing up?

102

00:04:28,710 --> 00:04:33,970

So my mom was adopted after  
her parents died in the war.

103

00:04:33,970 --> 00:04:36,680

And I know she's going to  
tell you that whole story,

104

00:04:36,680 --> 00:04:37,900

so I won't belabor it.

105

00:04:37,900 --> 00:04:42,430

But she was adopted by  
her mother's sister.

106

00:04:42,430 --> 00:04:47,360

So my grandma, because that's  
all they ever were to me.

107

00:04:47,360 --> 00:04:49,600

Margaret and Werner  
Lewy, who brought

108

00:04:49,600 --> 00:04:54,220

my mom and my mom's grandmother,

my grandma's mother,

109  
00:04:54,220 --> 00:04:55,870  
over after the war.

110  
00:04:55,870 --> 00:05:00,970  
Used to talk to me all the time  
about her sister [? Majta ?]

111  
00:05:00,970 --> 00:05:03,040  
and [? Majta's ?]  
husband Julius,

112  
00:05:03,040 --> 00:05:05,600  
who had died in the war.

113  
00:05:05,600 --> 00:05:09,110  
And that was your  
birth grandparents?

114  
00:05:09,110 --> 00:05:14,868  
Yes, so my adopted grandma  
who, as I said, to me

115  
00:05:14,868 --> 00:05:16,160  
they were only my grandparents.

116  
00:05:16,160 --> 00:05:21,860  
I call them Gramsy and Opa,  
used to talk about my birth

117  
00:05:21,860 --> 00:05:25,640  
grandparents all the time to me.

118  
00:05:25,640 --> 00:05:27,080  
So I knew this story.

119  
00:05:27,080 --> 00:05:29,840  
And interestingly enough,  
because my grandma

120  
00:05:29,840 --> 00:05:34,580

didn't talk to my mom that much  
about my mom's birth parents.

121  
00:05:34,580 --> 00:05:38,990  
I think it was because she  
didn't want my mom to be sad.

122  
00:05:38,990 --> 00:05:41,840  
And she wanted my mom to have  
a normal life, because she

123  
00:05:41,840 --> 00:05:45,170  
felt so badly for  
the circumstances

124  
00:05:45,170 --> 00:05:47,420  
in which my mom found herself.

125  
00:05:47,420 --> 00:05:51,770  
Because she shared a lot  
with me over many years.

126  
00:05:51,770 --> 00:05:53,660  
So more than she did  
with your mother?

127  
00:05:53,660 --> 00:05:54,770  
Yes.

128  
00:05:54,770 --> 00:05:56,090  
Yes.

129  
00:05:56,090 --> 00:05:58,550  
And my mom always found it  
hard to believe that she

130  
00:05:58,550 --> 00:05:59,900  
would tell me all these things.

131  
00:05:59,900 --> 00:06:01,700  
But I'm like, mom,  
don't you see?

132

00:06:01,700 --> 00:06:03,460

She's just trying  
to protect you.

133

00:06:03,460 --> 00:06:06,870

She doesn't want you to be sad.

134

00:06:06,870 --> 00:06:12,960

Off camera you had mentioned  
something to me about your mom

135

00:06:12,960 --> 00:06:17,490

and how it is that she ended  
up being alone but surviving.

136

00:06:17,490 --> 00:06:21,030

Can you share that with  
me about her own parents?

137

00:06:21,030 --> 00:06:27,120

So when my mom, she was  
born in Berlin in 1933.

138

00:06:27,120 --> 00:06:30,660

Her father was taken  
away to camp Gurs.

139

00:06:30,660 --> 00:06:33,150

Her father, Julius,  
who must have been

140

00:06:33,150 --> 00:06:35,370

an incredibly brave person.

141

00:06:35,370 --> 00:06:38,640

He pretended to be dead and  
actually escaped the camp

142

00:06:38,640 --> 00:06:40,680

and got back to Berlin.

143

00:06:40,680 --> 00:06:41,910

And then they left.

144  
00:06:41,910 --> 00:06:47,730  
So they was my mom,  
her mom, and dad.

145  
00:06:47,730 --> 00:06:48,270  
Excuse me.

146  
00:06:48,270 --> 00:06:50,924  
Can we cut for a second?

147  
00:06:50,924 --> 00:06:51,790  
Pausing.

148  
00:06:51,790 --> 00:06:53,310  
Here we go [BACKGROUND TALKING]

149  
00:06:53,310 --> 00:06:53,870  
Oh, hang on.

150  
00:06:53,870 --> 00:06:54,240  
Sorry.

151  
00:06:54,240 --> 00:06:55,005  
Just one moment please.

152  
00:06:55,005 --> 00:06:55,420  
Here we go.

153  
00:06:55,420 --> 00:06:56,550  
Rolling at speed  
whenever you're ready.

154  
00:06:56,550 --> 00:06:57,110  
OK.

155  
00:06:57,110 --> 00:06:57,940  
Sorry, Wendy.

156  
00:06:57,940 --> 00:06:59,050

No, no problem.

157  
00:06:59,050 --> 00:07:05,000  
So what I wanted to know  
more was how did your mom

158  
00:07:05,000 --> 00:07:06,830  
talk about her own parents?

159  
00:07:06,830 --> 00:07:10,520  
So my mom's parents were  
victims of the Holocaust.

160  
00:07:10,520 --> 00:07:13,520  
They were killed in  
an escape attempt.

161  
00:07:13,520 --> 00:07:17,120  
And then after the war, as  
I said, she was adopted.

162  
00:07:17,120 --> 00:07:21,020  
And I think that  
all her life she

163  
00:07:21,020 --> 00:07:23,990  
until later when we  
found some letters,

164  
00:07:23,990 --> 00:07:26,930  
she felt that her parents  
had abandoned her.

165  
00:07:26,930 --> 00:07:30,860  
And even as a young girl, I  
used to say, mom, don't you see?

166  
00:07:30,860 --> 00:07:33,380  
What they did was the  
ultimate sacrifice

167  
00:07:33,380 --> 00:07:37,580  
and the ultimate

bravery of parents.

168  
00:07:37,580 --> 00:07:43,200  
They gave you away so you to  
sisters so you would survive.

169  
00:07:43,200 --> 00:07:47,420  
And I think that  
being the child who

170  
00:07:47,420 --> 00:07:53,250  
was six when she was sent away,  
it was hard to get over that.

171  
00:07:53,250 --> 00:07:57,410  
And so she always felt that  
her parents had abandoned her.

172  
00:07:57,410 --> 00:08:00,350  
So tell me, did  
that ever change?

173  
00:08:00,350 --> 00:08:01,110  
Yes.

174  
00:08:01,110 --> 00:08:02,010  
How did that change?

175  
00:08:02,010 --> 00:08:06,740  
So when my  
grandfather, Opa, died,

176  
00:08:06,740 --> 00:08:11,390  
I was cleaning his apartment one  
day, and I found in his closet

177  
00:08:11,390 --> 00:08:16,970  
in a Marshall Field's  
box taped shut a box.

178  
00:08:16,970 --> 00:08:18,050  
And I had been--

179

00:08:18,050 --> 00:08:20,750  
it's sort of a miracle,  
because I had been throwing out

180

00:08:20,750 --> 00:08:22,370  
so much stuff from the closet.

181

00:08:22,370 --> 00:08:25,100  
But I looked at this box and  
I thought, this is curious.

182

00:08:25,100 --> 00:08:26,690  
Why is it taped shut?

183

00:08:26,690 --> 00:08:29,240  
And I opened the  
box, and in the box

184

00:08:29,240 --> 00:08:33,740  
there was a three ring  
binder full of letters.

185

00:08:33,740 --> 00:08:36,590  
And I sat down on the couch and  
I started reading the letters.

186

00:08:36,590 --> 00:08:39,409  
And they were in English,  
German, and French.

187

00:08:39,409 --> 00:08:42,470  
I read French, no German.

188

00:08:42,470 --> 00:08:45,800  
And I realized that  
what I had found

189

00:08:45,800 --> 00:08:51,200  
were letters from the relatives  
here to the relatives in Europe

190

00:08:51,200 --> 00:08:54,050



during the war and from  
the relatives in Europe

191  
00:08:54,050 --> 00:08:55,740  
to the relatives here.

192  
00:08:55,740 --> 00:08:59,390  
And that would include  
your birth grandparents,

193  
00:08:59,390 --> 00:09:00,320  
who didn't survive?

194  
00:09:00,320 --> 00:09:01,100  
Correct.

195  
00:09:01,100 --> 00:09:01,730  
It did.

196  
00:09:01,730 --> 00:09:07,340  
And I knew that none of us knew  
that these letters existed.

197  
00:09:07,340 --> 00:09:11,570  
And the first person  
I told was my dad.

198  
00:09:11,570 --> 00:09:16,640  
And he said, his first reaction  
was, we can't tell mom.

199  
00:09:16,640 --> 00:09:18,230  
She'll be too upset.

200  
00:09:18,230 --> 00:09:20,060  
We can't tell mom.

201  
00:09:20,060 --> 00:09:22,640  
And we thought  
about it together,

202  
00:09:22,640 --> 00:09:24,530

and then we both  
finally decided,

203  
00:09:24,530 --> 00:09:27,260  
they weren't our letters  
to hide from her.

204  
00:09:27,260 --> 00:09:31,530  
We had to show them  
to her and tell her.

205  
00:09:31,530 --> 00:09:33,260  
And what did they do?

206  
00:09:33,260 --> 00:09:37,220  
So when she found the  
letters and read them,

207  
00:09:37,220 --> 00:09:40,100  
there's one in particular  
that she'll discuss further.

208  
00:09:40,100 --> 00:09:44,570  
But it's from her mother.

209  
00:09:44,570 --> 00:09:45,310  
Sorry.

210  
00:09:45,310 --> 00:09:49,400  
To her mother's sister, Marget.

211  
00:09:49,400 --> 00:09:53,170  
And it is so touching.

212  
00:09:53,170 --> 00:09:55,450  
I've read it hundreds  
of times, and I

213  
00:09:55,450 --> 00:09:57,820  
cry every time I think  
about a mother having

214

00:09:57,820 --> 00:09:59,380  
to write this letter.

215  
00:09:59,380 --> 00:10:02,830  
And it said,  
basically, dear Marget,

216  
00:10:02,830 --> 00:10:05,410  
if anything were  
to happen to me,

217  
00:10:05,410 --> 00:10:07,480  
I can barely stand  
to think of this,

218  
00:10:07,480 --> 00:10:09,940  
but will you take  
my [? Trixieline ?]

219  
00:10:09,940 --> 00:10:12,160  
and raise her as your own?

220  
00:10:12,160 --> 00:10:15,760  
And so it's this heart  
wrenching letter from a mother

221  
00:10:15,760 --> 00:10:19,090  
to her sister saying,  
if I don't survive,

222  
00:10:19,090 --> 00:10:21,910  
because this sister was  
already in the United States,

223  
00:10:21,910 --> 00:10:25,450  
if I don't survive,  
will you adopt my child?

224  
00:10:25,450 --> 00:10:28,510  
And I think upon  
reading those letters

225  
00:10:28,510 --> 00:10:31,180

and seeing the pain that  
her parents went through

226

00:10:31,180 --> 00:10:34,900  
and then this agonizing letter  
of a mother to her sister,

227

00:10:34,900 --> 00:10:37,510  
it made my mom  
finally understand

228

00:10:37,510 --> 00:10:41,620  
how brave her parents were  
and how all they cared about

229

00:10:41,620 --> 00:10:43,210  
was that she might survive.

230

00:10:43,210 --> 00:10:45,580  
Because they already  
knew since my grandfather

231

00:10:45,580 --> 00:10:47,620  
had already escaped one camp.

232

00:10:47,620 --> 00:10:52,090  
They were not delusional about  
the dangers that potentially

233

00:10:52,090 --> 00:10:55,000  
awaited all of them.

234

00:10:55,000 --> 00:10:57,330  
It helped my mom a lot.

235

00:10:57,330 --> 00:11:00,370  
And so you were in  
many ways a catalyst

236

00:11:00,370 --> 00:11:10,100  
for having this box of letters,  
actually give a gift of love

237

00:11:10,100 --> 00:11:13,590  
from 70 years  
earlier to your mom.

238

00:11:13,590 --> 00:11:14,540  
It's true.

239

00:11:14,540 --> 00:11:20,150  
And I want to stop now at  
that point and fast forward

240

00:11:20,150 --> 00:11:22,040  
to a few years ago.

241

00:11:22,040 --> 00:11:24,530  
Because it sounds to  
me like you're catalyst

242

00:11:24,530 --> 00:11:26,930  
for yet another discovery.

243

00:11:26,930 --> 00:11:29,750  
It all comes from keeping  
my maiden name, I think.

244

00:11:29,750 --> 00:11:30,620  
[LAUGHTER]

245

00:11:30,620 --> 00:11:31,670  
You never know.

246

00:11:31,670 --> 00:11:32,870  
You never know.

247

00:11:32,870 --> 00:11:38,190  
So tell me what happened  
in 2014, I believe it was.

248

00:11:38,190 --> 00:11:41,180  
So I told you before  
we were on camera.

249

00:11:41,180 --> 00:11:42,842

It was Halloween,  
and I remember,

250

00:11:42,842 --> 00:11:44,300

because I have a  
funny neighbor who

251

00:11:44,300 --> 00:11:45,740

always had a Halloween party.

252

00:11:45,740 --> 00:11:49,280

And we had come home, and when I  
walked in the door of my house,

253

00:11:49,280 --> 00:11:51,020

I found a letter.

254

00:11:51,020 --> 00:11:55,970

And it was addressed to me  
from a Mindy Malinoff Lorey.

255

00:11:55,970 --> 00:11:59,850

And it started and  
it said, dear Wendy,

256

00:11:59,850 --> 00:12:02,060

if you are the  
Wendy Muchman that

257

00:12:02,060 --> 00:12:04,970

is Al Muchman's  
granddaughter, we're

258

00:12:04,970 --> 00:12:10,670

cousins, because my grandma,  
Fanny Muchman Malinoff

259

00:12:10,670 --> 00:12:12,530

was his sister.

260

00:12:12,530 --> 00:12:15,350

And the second I read it,  
I knew we were cousins.

261  
00:12:15,350 --> 00:12:18,380  
Because I knew that my  
paternal grandfather, who

262  
00:12:18,380 --> 00:12:21,650  
died when I was very young,  
had a sister from whom

263  
00:12:21,650 --> 00:12:22,447  
he was estranged.

264  
00:12:22,447 --> 00:12:24,530  
And this is the Russian  
Jewish side of the family.

265  
00:12:24,530 --> 00:12:27,230  
This is the Russian  
Jewish side of the family.

266  
00:12:27,230 --> 00:12:30,740  
And he had this sister  
from whom he was estranged.

267  
00:12:30,740 --> 00:12:33,740  
I knew right away, and I  
knew her name was Fanny.

268  
00:12:33,740 --> 00:12:37,550  
So I called Mindy, and we spoke.

269  
00:12:37,550 --> 00:12:41,060  
And then we've been in contact  
with Mindy and Doug Lorey, who

270  
00:12:41,060 --> 00:12:44,810  
are amazing and  
lovely and incredibly

271  
00:12:44,810 --> 00:12:48,200  
knowledgeable about

researching family histories.

272

00:12:48,200 --> 00:12:49,620

It's a passion of theirs.

273

00:12:49,620 --> 00:12:52,280

And so they researched.

274

00:12:52,280 --> 00:12:54,380

They like to research  
ancestry.com,

275

00:12:54,380 --> 00:12:57,590

and that was how they  
found me and then my mom.

276

00:12:57,590 --> 00:13:00,710

So here's the thing,  
if I can understand it.

277

00:13:00,710 --> 00:13:04,040

They are both newfound cousins  
that you didn't know existed.

278

00:13:04,040 --> 00:13:04,820

Correct.

279

00:13:04,820 --> 00:13:10,520

And they are also  
genealogy aficionados.

280

00:13:10,520 --> 00:13:11,310

Yes.

281

00:13:11,310 --> 00:13:13,340

100%.

282

00:13:13,340 --> 00:13:17,630

Neither my mom nor I could  
have figured out any of this

283

00:13:17,630 --> 00:13:18,660



without them.

284

00:13:18,660 --> 00:13:20,570

So what happened  
after you discovered

285

00:13:20,570 --> 00:13:22,060

and after they discovered you?

286

00:13:22,060 --> 00:13:25,970

So I see them with my mom  
a couple times a year.

287

00:13:25,970 --> 00:13:29,300

My mom sees and talks  
to them more regularly.

288

00:13:29,300 --> 00:13:32,000

And either they  
offered or my mom

289

00:13:32,000 --> 00:13:37,340

asked to see what they could  
find about her father, Julius

290

00:13:37,340 --> 00:13:37,910

Westheimer.

291

00:13:37,910 --> 00:13:40,980

Because we knew her  
mother's family tree,

292

00:13:40,980 --> 00:13:42,980

so the Boas side,  
which was her mother.

293

00:13:42,980 --> 00:13:45,470

We knew that history.

294

00:13:45,470 --> 00:13:47,960

But we didn't know a  
lot about her father.

295

00:13:47,960 --> 00:13:50,420

We always thought-- whose  
name was Julius Westheimer.

296

00:13:50,420 --> 00:13:52,830

We always thought  
he was an orphan.

297

00:13:52,830 --> 00:13:55,970

So Mindy and Doug did  
some more research

298

00:13:55,970 --> 00:14:00,470

on ancestry.com, which  
led us to this discovery.

299

00:14:00,470 --> 00:14:01,790

And what was that discover?

300

00:14:01,790 --> 00:14:06,350

So the discovery is there's a  
large branch of the Westheimer

301

00:14:06,350 --> 00:14:10,370

family that lives  
mostly on the East Coast

302

00:14:10,370 --> 00:14:16,850

and that my mom actually has a  
lot of second cousins living,

303

00:14:16,850 --> 00:14:19,820

still alive, living  
on the East Coast.

304

00:14:19,820 --> 00:14:22,820

And when did you  
find out about that?

305

00:14:22,820 --> 00:14:26,630

So in about I want to say  
it was June of this year.

306

00:14:26,630 --> 00:14:27,130

This year?

307

00:14:27,130 --> 00:14:28,460

So about three months ago.

308

00:14:28,460 --> 00:14:29,030

Yes.

309

00:14:29,030 --> 00:14:33,320

My mom called me at work and said, I can't believe it.

310

00:14:33,320 --> 00:14:35,870

Doug and Mindy found these cousins.

311

00:14:35,870 --> 00:14:41,930

I think I have a cousin Renate who lives on the East Coast.

312

00:14:41,930 --> 00:14:46,130

And her daughter, Sherry Goodman, is a lawyer.

313

00:14:46,130 --> 00:14:48,380

Do you think you can find her?

314

00:14:48,380 --> 00:14:50,870

So I said, give me 20 minutes.

315

00:14:50,870 --> 00:14:52,640

Because as I told you, I'm a lawyer.

316

00:14:52,640 --> 00:14:56,330

And lawyers all have to be registered publicly

317

00:14:56,330 --> 00:14:57,740

in some state.

318

00:14:57,740 --> 00:15:00,920

And so with my  
investigator at work,

319

00:15:00,920 --> 00:15:04,100

we started calling some  
of the state bar councils.

320

00:15:04,100 --> 00:15:06,050

And literally we  
called New York,

321

00:15:06,050 --> 00:15:08,120

I think Connecticut,  
and then Massachusetts.

322

00:15:08,120 --> 00:15:12,590

And boom, I found  
Sherry, who's incredible,

323

00:15:12,590 --> 00:15:15,860

who unfortunately had  
to leave this morning.

324

00:15:15,860 --> 00:15:17,750

But she made this  
whole thing happen

325

00:15:17,750 --> 00:15:19,940

with you and this interview.

326

00:15:19,940 --> 00:15:23,690

And she's a lost cousin,  
Renate's daughter,

327

00:15:23,690 --> 00:15:24,830

close to my age.

328

00:15:24,830 --> 00:15:26,450

So it's just been lovely.

329

00:15:26,450 --> 00:15:31,400

So here's the thing is that  
through your newfound cousins

330  
00:15:31,400 --> 00:15:34,000  
on your father's  
side of the family,

331  
00:15:34,000 --> 00:15:37,220  
you discovered new found  
cousins from your mother's

332  
00:15:37,220 --> 00:15:40,250  
side of the family that  
you never knew existed.

333  
00:15:40,250 --> 00:15:40,880  
Never.

334  
00:15:40,880 --> 00:15:43,430  
And I told Sherry this  
morning as she was leaving,

335  
00:15:43,430 --> 00:15:46,000  
you're the kind of relatives  
that are nice to find.

336  
00:15:46,000 --> 00:15:47,790  
[LAUGHTER]

337  
00:15:47,790 --> 00:15:51,710  
Because they flew in  
yesterday, or was it Sunday?

338  
00:15:51,710 --> 00:15:54,350  
No, they flew in Sunday, and  
we all met for the first time,

339  
00:15:54,350 --> 00:15:57,740  
and it's just been a wonderful  
sort of magical and kind

340  
00:15:57,740 --> 00:16:00,520  
of incredible couple of days.

341  
00:16:00,520 --> 00:16:01,386  
Thank you, Wendy.

342  
00:16:01,386 --> 00:16:02,950  
Thank you for sharing this.

343  
00:16:02,950 --> 00:16:05,995  
Thank you so much for your  
time and your interest

344  
00:16:05,995 --> 00:16:07,120  
and your knowledge as well.

345  
00:16:07,120 --> 00:16:07,930  
Thank you.

346  
00:16:07,930 --> 00:16:09,190  
Thank you again.

347  
00:16:09,190 --> 00:16:12,880  
And you've given the  
perfect intro for now for us

348  
00:16:12,880 --> 00:16:16,180  
to meet your mom and  
your new Aunt Renate.

349  
00:16:16,180 --> 00:16:16,940  
Great.

350  
00:16:16,940 --> 00:16:17,470  
Thank you.

351  
00:16:17,470 --> 00:16:17,970  
All right.

352  
00:16:17,970 --> 00:16:19,200  
Thanks so much.