**Debbie Shalom:** Okay, so this is Cafe Europa.

**Naomi Waldman:** Cafe Europa, I think it's wonderful. It's a place to meet people from your own generation.

**Debbie Shalom:** Cafe Europa has existed since the 1980s. It began in America. It was named after a cafe where Holocaust survivors met in Europe.

**Naomi Waldman:** Sometimes there are very nice programs, and sometimes it’s a little boring. Joe, he's the comedian here.

**Joe Wiesner:** My name is Joe Wiesner.

**Mitch Ginsburg**: What's the draw for you?

**Joe Wiesner:** They have some good looking women here. The food is okay also.

**Monique:** My original name is Monique because I come from France. I am also a Holocaust survivor.

**Mitch Ginsburg**: You are.

**Monique:** I am, yes. We are all.

**Unknown Speaker1:** In Holland I was in hiding from the age of six weeks.

**Naomi Waldman:** You mean this war now? Yeah, everybody talks about it… just it's so awful. It's like it never stops for the Jews. They're killing the Jews. They hate the Jews

**Unknown Speaker2:**. Yeah, our grandson was serving in the Gaza. He was *miluim* (reserves). They called him in, and he was there for a while, wasn't doing much, and then they released him. So now he's home.

**Singer:** I invite you to sing with me, and if you don't, and you just want to relax and enjoy them. I hope that you enjoy them.

*[Singing]*

**Unknown Speaker3:** This is like a Fabreingin without the vodka.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** Hey listeners, it's Mishy. So as you know, we're continuing our series of Wartime Diaries, which is our attempt to capture different experiences of this terrible war. The horrific stories of October 7th reminded many people of the darkest chapter in Jewish history: the Holocaust. And indeed there have been as many comparisons to the Shoah as there have been critiques of those comparisons. There are about 130,000 Holocaust survivors living in Israel today, just under 10,000 live in Jerusalem, and many of them participate in the Jerusalem Foundation's Cafe Europa. Cafe Europa offers not only a physical meeting place, but also a whole range of social and cultural activities: concerts, lectures, memorials, workshops, as well as professional help in navigating the thickets of Israeli bureaucracy. We spent a morning at the Cafe Europa branch in Jerusalem's German colony. There were all kinds of opinions about the Holocaust comparison, but the person with the strongest feelings on the matter just so happened to also be Cafe Europa’s oldest member, Walter Bingham. A few weeks later, Mitch Ginsberg and I visited Walter, who is the oldest active journalist in the world, in his home in downtown Jerusalem. Walter greeted us at the door, welcomed us in.

**Mishy Harman:** Hello Walter, nice to meet you. Mishy Harman, hi.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** Hello, My name is Mitch.

**Walter Bingham:** Are you the boss there?

**Mishy Harman (narration):** And started by giving us a tour of his study.

**Walter Bingham:** This one here is in his president's home. This is King George the sixth in Buckingham Palace. A bravery award from World War Two. Montgomery’s signature here is from 1944. This is the highest French honor—Legion on Honor. You French?

**Mishy Harman:** No, no.

**Walter Bingham:** And there are two here which are Guinness World Records: the oldest working journalist in the world, and the oldest working radio commentator/show host. This one is honorary: it actually says I'm a black belt in krav maga.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** Are you a black belt?

**Walter Bingham:** No, I'm not a black belt. I am no belt. I'm Walter Bingham. And a week or two ago I celebrated my 100th birthday, which means I'm now in my 100 and first year of life. I feel good. On a good day, I feel like 40; on a bad day, like 50, and today is a good day.

**Mishy Harman:** Walter, I know that it's an impossible task to summarize 100 years in a short answer, but can you tell us a little bit about where you were born and sort of the story of the stations of your life?

**Walter Bingham:** Well, I was born in Germany, obviously 100 years ago, which was fifth of January— secular date, 1924. And at age six I started going to school which was before that was Weimar Republic. And for three years I went to school before Hitler came to power. That was okay, you know, I got the ball like everybody else in school. We didn't have a Jewish school. And then Hitler came to power, and everything changed. Of course the children that I went to school with…their parents were the people who voted for Hitler, so obviously they were indoctrinated. And life at school was very tough. I was sitting next to a German boy, an Aryan boy, and he copied my work as one does at school. He got good marks and mine were bad. And when I lifted my finger to answer the question, the teacher's question, I wasn't called anymore because…I'm not saying I was right, but he couldn't take a chance that a Jew knew something. And so it went on, and eventually I had to sit in the back of the class. And you know what kind of sign that gives, that means: do with me what you like, and they did. Then we were thrown out of school because they couldn't expect the Aryan children to have to sit with a Jew in the class, and that was the kind of atmosphere. And at 15-and-a-half, I left with a Kindertransport (Children’s Transport). Some went to foster parents; others went to hostels. The lucky ones had *mishpacha* (family), they had family. I went with a religious Zionist youth movement.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** To the English countryside?

**Walter Bingham:** Yeah, Yeah.And I went in the British Army. I was four years a soldier. You see a British soldier went into the army because he had to.

He was called up years ago, or he wants to fight for his country. Now I had no country to fight for, certainly not the Germans, and I only just come to England not all that many years before that, not my country. To this day not my country. And our motivation was not to fight for a country, it was fight against the Nazis. So therefore we refugees did a lot more risky things. I mean what I did is small to compare to what some others did behind the lines. We had a motivation to finish the job and get the Nazis.

So when I landed in the water on the beaches of Normandy driving an ambulance…I was initially an ambulance driver, and I went through France, Belgium, Holland, and I always said to the army: “Look, anybody can drive an ambulance with some training. I speak German, surely we're going into Germany, you’ll need some German speakers. And eventually, just before a very big battle that was disastrous for Britain, over the… River Rhine in a place called Arnhem in Holland. Just before that they transferred me, otherwise I wouldn't be here, because I know myself, I would have gone where the shit was flying (excuse the language). I would have gone where the action was. They transferred me from the battlefield to an office at Oxford Circus in London: a secret office over a department store. One of the Oxford Circus corners—where I was trained as a document specialist, and in counterintelligence.

And then I came out of the army on the last Day of 1947 when I went to the demobilization center, and they gave me a coat and a suit, and here's your railway ticket: goodbye. There was no aftercare, no post traumatic stress care that everybody does today. And I had suffered under that, I suppose. And then one day, an emissary from Israel found me, and he said: “Look, you're an experienced soldier. Come, we need you.” And I said: “I had a bloody war right up to here. I'm not going.” And then I was in London, and I married…I got married eventually, and my wife liked England. What do you do if your wife doesn't want to go, so I'm stuck.

**Mishy Harman:** And you spent the next 50 years there?

**Walter Bingham:** Yeah, I was in London working in journalism and radio. And then my wife died in 1990. After that my daughter made Aliyah…so I thought that I should be somewhere where she is, because I'm getting on. And then I decided it's time for me to come as well so that we're all together here. Because I was getting old. I was getting on at 80: old. And today I'm 100.

**Mishy Harman:** So for the last two decades you've been here in Jerusalem, and Walter, where were you on October 7th?

**Walter Bingham:** I was getting ready to fly out of the country on October the eighth.

**Mishy Harman:** How come?

**Walter Bingham:** The organization March of the Living have organized a trip to relive the Kindertransport. So they chose three people from that Kindertransport. I was one of them. And if it hadn't been this important subject of telling the world about this; if it hadn't been something like that, if it had been a pleasure trip I would never have left my country—

absolutely not. I felt very uneasy on the eighth of October to leave the country.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** I guess we were curious though, Walter, as somebody who fled Germany as a youth on that Kindertransport, to be back in Germany what did it feel like in your head?

**Walter Bingham:** Things came back to you. You know, you remembered. I mean the Germans did terrible cruelty. Don't want to describe it now, and you can't describe the cruelties that the Hamas did on the seventh of October. But the big difference between the events in Germany and the events here in October. October the seventh was an indescribable, cruel event, but it was not the Holocaust. The Holocaust was a state organized event; the October the seventh was organized by a terror group. Yes, they were ruling the Gaza Strip, but they were not a state. They were a terror group. And there's a big difference. So you cannot compare it with the Holocaust…the Holocaust was…well, I don't have to explain it. It was quite a different event. The Holocaust. was an organized killing machine over a very long time. October the seventh was a terrorist attack of the utmost cruelty. But we have a state of Israel. With all our mistakes, we could prevent it going on. We are able to fight those terrorists, and we are doing it right now, as we speak, and defeating them.

**Mishy Harman:** So what do you feel when Bibi and other people talk about the Hamas as Nazis or the Israeli ambassador to the UN wears the yellow star to the Security Council?

**Walter Bingham:** Well I was appalled that he wore a yellow star following the event in October.

**Mishy Harman:** Why?

**Walter Bingham:** Because it diminished the impact and the event of the Holocaust.

**Mishy Harman:** Walter, let me ask you, as somebody who lived through more history than most people, what does it feel like now, at the age of 100 to reach this moment, which I can imagine is tough because there's a general sense of hopelessness and of despair and of sinking into violence and stuff like that. Do you feel that?

**Walter Bingham:** No. Old people in Cafe Europa: “Oh, the good old days.” The good old: nonsense. They were not the good old days. I would love to be young today. Today is the days to live. So I think we are living… unfortunately we have some problems here, but we are living in an era which could be paradise. I see a wonderful future. We are not going anywhere. We will defeat them all as we have done in the past. It will be sometimes more difficult. Unfortunately it will cost us lives. But the country is more important than the individual. And here we get into the question of the hostages, which is a terrible thing. I mean if we went for the hostages, the war would be over in eight days, but the country is first and the individual is second.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** And what's your role in all this?

**Walter Bingham:** Look, I would very much like to go and do some military service, like something, like being at a *machsom* somewhere—what they call it in English?

**Mishy Harman:** Checkpoint.

**Walter Bingham:** At some checkpoint where I could… not on the front line. I would love to be at some checkpoint. And I think I could handle it.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** Now today, at 100.

**Walter Bingham:** Yeah, I think I could handle it.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** But I want to maybe look if you can a little bit ahead. How do you see the immediate future for the country, for Israel?

**Walter Bingham:** Look, there were the Roman Empire, the Greek Empire, the Chinese Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the Ottoman Empire, the British Empire: where are they? All gone—and we are here, and we'll always be here. We're going nowhere, and we are flourishing, and we will defeat them all as we have done in the past.

Look, they're telling us today the civilians, the civilians, that we are not caring for the civilians in Gaza. I remind them of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Dresden. One thousand bombers in two days dropped 3,000 bombs, including incendiaries, and burned half the population of Dresden in Germany. And Nagasaki and Hiroshima, there were no terrorists: the soldiers were in the front and the women and children were at home. There were no terrorists there. And you didn't care about civilians. Don't tell us. And I hope that both President Herzog, Prime Minister Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant will have told Anthony Blinken, the American where to get off. Don't interfere with us.

  *[Hebrew Song]*

 Mishy Harman: **Walter, are you afraid of dying?**

**Walter Bingham:** I’m not ready for it. I have a lot of work to do. I’m not ready. I feel immortal. The only time I realize I’m old is when I pass a mirror. My inside knows it’s old; my body knows it’s old. But I’m not old. Am I afraid? I love life. I lead a very interesting life, a happy life.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** Are there any dreams that remain unfulfilled?

**Walter Bingham:** Any dreams? Yes, I have dreams to have a nice, young girlfriend, but it’s not materializing.