

## **LBE 2009 – Migration**

### **Episode 3: Living without documents**

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#### **Characters:**

**Narrator 1:** female

**Narrator 2:** male

**Inserts (English):** male, (42)

**Voice** (“Passport, please!”, “No passport?”, “No passport!”)

#### **Intro:**

Hello! Welcome to the “Learning by Ear” series about migration. In this program we will tell you about the underground life of a Liberian man. He has been in Germany for four years now. Although he reached his destination, he is not sure anymore, whether it was the right decision. We’ll show how he lives today, and you will also learn more about his journey from Africa to Europe. Since he doesn’t have official permission to live in Germany, we aren’t going to mention his real name in any part of the program. Let’s just call him “John”.

**1. SFX: Mixed sounds of journey (lorry, motor boat, sea waves, car)**

**2. Sound Clip John:**

“When you start this journey, you don’t think of going back. You only think of forward, not stop.”

**3. Narrator 1:**

John did not expect that this would mean he would have to live the life of an illegal alien – underground. Before he started his trip, he didn’t imagine the kind of situation he would find himself in later.

**4. Sound Clip John:**

“When you see it on TV, Europe is a fair land where somebody can make life better. It’s a better place, green pasture... I saw it myself!”

**5. Narrator 2:**

Back home, in Liberia: John is a farmer, life is ok. But he thinks, it could always be better. To achieve this, he starts a journey of 5,300 km and passes through seven borders. The whole trip takes him four years. In each country he works to get the money for the next stage of the trip.

## **6. SFX: Mixed sounds of journey (lorry, barrier opening, sea waves, car)**

### **7. Narrator 1:**

Now John knows he hasn't achieved what the television had promised him. He lives at a friend's place. He cleans the house, his friend pays the rent. John cooks for his flat mate but cannot afford to buy any food himself, nor the clothes or the shoes he's wearing. It's the local Protestant church that provides him with food and clothing.

## **8. SFX: War sounds, shootings**

### **9. Narrator 2:**

Liberia in 1990 – a country at war: John leaves everything behind and moves to a refugee camp at the border between Guinea-Conakry and his homeland. At this time, he can't get the idea of leading a better life out of his mind. He gets a visa for Senegal and joins some people who have the same goal: to leave Guinea. This is where his journey starts.

**10. Sound Clip John:**

“We got information, there are some agents, you know, this whole transporters, or you can go to a park, for transport, you can see other people there. You say, ok, you have to make this journey, ok, I have a transport. I would take the normal transport to this place”

**11. SFX: Mixed sounds of journey (lorry, sea waves, car)**

**12. Sound Clip John:**

“My destination was here, directly to this country, where I am now: Germany. Now I am here. The other question is: How does it go on. I ask myself all the time, if I actually want it.”

**13. SFX: People on the street**

**14. Narrator 1:**

In Germany, he tries to become part of society. But he is not. He is afraid of being checked by the officials and this fear is almost always there. When he takes the bus or the train, he tries to do everything correctly so that he doesn't draw attention of the authorities. He wants to be invisible.

**15. SFX: Mixed sounds of journey (car, sea waves, lorry)**

**16. Sound Clip John:**

“You pass through the Sahara desert. That’s a very risky transport, you know, because of the heat, the dust, and everything. You have to be prepared for any situation you have to face.”

**17. SFX: Lorry on gravel ground, then fade under**

**18. Narrator 2:**

The transport is more of a lorry, a Mercedes 911, transformed into a passenger bus.

**19. Sound Clip John:**

“I wouldn’t say it’s a normal transport because it’s carrying illegal migrants (laughs) (...) “There was no one having documents.”

**20. SFX: Lorry on gravel ground**

**21. Sound Clip John:**

“We call them pushers. Because they have to get the information, at times they have to get some fake documents, to be able just to pass through.”

**22. Voice: “Passport please!”**

**23. SFX: coins falling, barrier opening, car going away**  
*(fade under)*

**24. Narrator 2:**

40 dollars - this is how much it costs him to get to Morocco. This money is still part of the sum he had saved while working as a farmer in Liberia. But most of it is not spent on transport...

**25. Sound Clip John:**

“You have to bribe the border guards, you know. We have to bribe, money, money, we have to bribe them to cross. The transporters, the drivers, they know the border guards very well. So he bribes them, we go through.”

**26. SFX: Mixed sounds of journey (lorry, sea waves)**

**27. Sound Clip John:**

“None of my documents I have with me, when I was in Morocco. None of them I have with me now. Because all of them have to be thrown away, because when I was in Spain, if they found any documents with me, I would have been returned to Morocco. There I would be arrested.”

**28. Narrator 1:**

There are some who call people in his condition “illegals”. Actually, they’re not illegal. They just don’t have any document which gives them a name, an age, a birth place, or a nationality.

**29. Voice:** “Passport, please!”

**30. SFX:** heart beating

**31. Sound Clip John:**

“I’m afraid because I’m illegal here. I’m afraid of being controlled. I exclude myself from too many public activities. My heart beats, yeah but not show in your face. They cannot see inside here so... when it appears on your face... something wrong with this guy. I just walk past freely. Cause I know ... the way you are suspected they control you.”

**32. Narrator 1:**

Many things in his current life happen to him unexpectedly. Although he always was headed for his destination, Germany, he didn’t know much about this country, before he arrived. Even though he had been given some advice before his departure:

**33. Sound Clip John:**

“First of all, you have to look for a woman, you get married to, to stay here in this country, you are able to get a pass, that’s how you are able to facilitate your other documents. To get everything freely. To get a job, to get an apartment.”

**34. SFX: Mixed sounds of journey (car, sea waves, lorry)**

*Fade under*

**35. Narrator 2:**

It’s a two-day journey from Senegal to Morocco. He takes water with him, a lot of it, and he takes African cakes, condensed bread, a bag with some clothes and a tooth brush. That’s all.

**36. SFX: Lorry on gravel ground - *Fade under***

**37. Sound Clip John:**

“We had to talk with each other. About what we are going to face. Just what you dream. What you are going to do here in Europe. Sort of that. (...) How you are going to continue from Morocco, after you arrived there. What to do. How you are going to survive it.”

**38. SFX: Lorry on gravel ground, then fade out**



**39. Sound Clip John:**

“I thought it would be a very nice, smooth life, easy going. I thought when I come here I get a job easily, get the documents. To start a new life. Not the way it is now.”

**40. SFX: Mixed sounds of journey (lorry, sea waves, car)**

**41. Narrator 1:**

With no documents, there is only one solution: to live underground. Officially, he isn't in Germany, not in the eyes of the authorities.

**42. Sound Clip John:**

“I don't keep too many friends because of my status here... I might get into trouble, I don't keep too much friends.”

**43. Narrator 1:**

He sometimes goes to the cybercafé, he meets the few friends he has, he reads and cooks. And sometimes he's lucky, he finds an occasional job for one or two days – as a gardener or cleaner. Everything illegal, of course.

**44. SFX: street traders, *then fade under***

**45. Narrator 2:**

Rabat: John earns his life selling razors, shaving cream, blades. After eight months, he has 1,600 dollars. Half of it he has to spend on the crossing of the Mediterranean Sea. Though not in a normal ferry...

**46. SFX: Motor boat, sea waves, then fade under**

**47. Sound Clip John:**

“That would be suicide (laughs). Then you would be deported immediately. You don’t have documents. (...) You see them, you know the business they do. They tell you, you go closer to them. So, when are you ready? At what time? You know. You pay your due, your money, so you are ready. There were around 14 of us, plus 2 pushers - maybe 16 of us.”

**48. SFX: Sea waves, then fade under**

**49. Sound Clip John:**

“We sailed at night, I can’t actually remember how many hours. (...) I was not interested, because all the time my eye was closed. Praying, you know. Because not everybody made it. Because you don’t trust water.”

**50. SFX: Sea waves, then fade out**

**51. Narrator 2:**

While crossing the Mediterranean, as he recalls, the Spanish coast guard arrives and saves him and the others on the boat. They take them to the mainland, keep them all together in a building, give them medical examinations and question them.

**52. SFX: typing machine** *(fade in)*

**53. Voice:** “No passport?”

**53b. SFX: Footsteps running away, then fade under**

**54. Narrator 2:**

There are no guards. So John stays for five days, then he runs away. He spends the first time on the streets. But it is here, in Marbella, Spain, that he stays for one year gathering money for the last stage of his trip.

**55. Sound Clip John:**

“I worked in a greenhouse, you know. Worked in a tomato plantation, zucchini plantation. I had to work with somebody’s documents in order to get a good job. (...)Try to gather some money together in order to move forward to Germany.”

**56. SFX: Car on street, then fade under**

**57. Narrator 2:**

The last part of his journey costs him 280 euros. A friend of a friend takes him by car to the German city of Freiburg.

**58. SFX: Car on street, then fade under**

**59. Narrator 2:**

John finally reaches Bonn in western Germany. The friend who used to live here and whom he has been expecting to see in Germany since he started his journey, left the country two weeks before he arrives. With no contacts, not speaking the language, with no job or accommodation and no woman, the destination is life underground.

**60. Sound Clip John:**

“These years I have passed was not real life I was living.  
Anyway, I have not made any better life since I arrived here.”

**61. SFX: Mixed sounds of journey (lorry, sea waves, car)**

**62. Voice: “No passport!”**

**Outro:**

And this brings us to the end of today's "Learning by Ear" program about migration. This story was written by Marta Barroso.

If you wish to find out more about migration issues in Germany, you can go to the website of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees:

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And if you want to listen to this or other "Learning by Ear" programs again, go to our website at:

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Good-bye and stay well!