

LEARNING BY EAR

“DRUGS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE – THE HIGH THAT BRINGS YOU LOW”

EPISODE 4: “The Truth About Drugs”

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List of characters by scene:

SCENE ONE: AT THE POLICE STATION

- **Beri (f, 45)**
- **Jabali (m,18)**

SCENE TWO: OKOSHO AND ZULA AT BAMJU’S PLACE

- **Okosho (m, 18)**
- **Zula (m, 18)**
- **Bamju (m, 40)**

SCENE THREE: INSIDE THE SCHOOL HALL AT LIMBI HIGH

- **Mrs. Chacha (f, 45)**
- **Chambo (m, 30)**
- **5-6 Mixed voices (m/f, 14-18)**

Narrator (m/f)

INTRO:

Hello and welcome to the fourth episode of Learning by Ear, as we continue with this radio novella about drugs and substance abuse called “**The High that Brings You Low**”. We left off as police commissioner Beri was questioning a young suspect brought in by Inspector Tino. Elsewhere in the city, Beri’s husband Puyanga has met with the criminal Bamju to ask him to recruit more peddlers, because a huge consignment of hard drugs has just come in. Will Bamju succeed in finding people to sell the drugs for him? Who is he going to target? You’ll also remember that the youth worker Chambo is planning to give a talk today on drugs and substance abuse at Limbi High School. Let’s dive straight into today’s episode, called “**The Truth About Drugs**”. We start with young Jabali, who’s just woken up at the police station – and he’s got a terrible hangover.

SCENE ONE: AT THE POLICE STATION

1. **JABALI:** **(awakening)** Arrgh! Where am I?

2. **BERI:** We ask the questions around here, young man. What is your name? And what did you take last night? We found you half-naked behind Club 2000. You'd urinated in your pants and thrown up everywhere. You know that this is wrong, especially in a public place.

3. **JABALI:** **(starts to remember)** Oh no... no! What did they give me? Uurgh - I stink... I... Please forgive me. It was my first time, and...

4. **BERI:** Obviously. Listen - I'm going to let you go this time, because you seem to me like a decent person who probably got mixed up with the wrong company. But if I see you here again, you won't be let off so lightly. Is that clear?

5. **JABALI:** Yes. Thank you, madam. But please can I have some water, and some painkillers?

6. **BERI:** **(firmly)** No. This is not a hospital - this is a police station. Now get out of here, before I change my mind.

7. **SFX: FOOTSTEPS QUICKLY LEAVING**

8. SFX: BERI SITS DOWN ON A CREAKING CHAIR AND HITS ON HER DESK

9. BERI: (to herself) Oh Puyanga, my husband... I may have to deal with you as a police officer, not as a wife. This is getting out of hand now. Young lives are being destroyed.

10. NARRATOR: Beri is right. The drug problem is getting out of hand in many places, not just here. More and more young people are getting hooked and wasting their lives. As Jabali is dragging himself out of the police station, Bamju has finally managed to get hold of two prospective drug peddlars. You've guessed it: Jabali's friends, Okosho and Zula. The three of them are now sitting together at Bamju's house, plotting how to sell more drugs.

SCENE TWO: OKOSHO AND ZULA AT BAMJU'S PLACE

- 11. BAMJU:** Okay, here's the deal. You pick up the stuff, you sell it, you bring the money back to me and I pay you on the spot. And don't dare kidding me. I will always find you if I want!
- 12. ZULA:** **(excited)** Wow! This is cool, man. It's like those movies, you know, with the mafia and gangs.
- 13. OKOSHO:** Shut up, Zula. This is serious business. Okay, so who are our customers? And what if we get caught? Are you going to help us?
- 14. BAMJU:** Who are your customers? Young people of course: your friends, people from your school. Why do you think I hired you? Of course, I'll hire others too, people no one will suspect - street beggars, shoe polishers, newspaper vendors. Your work is just to sell to students. There's only one rule in this game: don't get caught!
- 15. ZULA:** **(very excited)** I told you, Okosho, this is just like being in an action movie!
- 16. BAMJU:** Does your friend think he's an actor or something? Here. Your portion of weed.

- 17. OKOSHO:** Can't you tell us what these drugs are? We can't sell something if we don't know what it is.
- 18. ZULA:** Yeah - or something we haven't tasted.
- 19. BAMJU:** I'm not sure myself yet, but I suspect it's brown sugar.
- 20. ZULA:** Sugar? Is this some kind of joke? We're going to sell sugar?
- 21. OKOSHO:** That's one of the street names for heroin, you dumb ass.
- 22. ZULA:** My oh my! I like this movie.
- 23. NARRATOR:** The problem with the illegal drug trade is that promises people a quick way of earning money, but it's a life filled with betrayal, blackmail, and the constant fear of capture and arrest. This is the kind of life Okosho and Zula have entered into. Meanwhile, this afternoon students at their old school, Limbi High, have come to hear Chambo talk about drug and substance abuse – and a certain ex-student is also in the audience.

SCENE THREE: INSIDE THE SCHOOL HALL AT LIMBI HIGH

24. SFX: HIGH SCHOOL AMBIENCE

25. SFX: Ringing bell

26. MRS. CHACHA: All right, attention everyone! Today we're honoured to have a guest in our school. Mr. Chambo is the founder of Youth Watch, a community-based organisation that helps kids stay clear of drug abuse. Let's welcome him!

27. SFX: APPLAUSE FROM STUDENTS

28. MRS. CHACHA: Thank you, thank you. Now, without wasting any time, I'll hand over to you, Mr. Chambo. Please go ahead.

29. CHAMBO: (**firmly**) Let me say first that I'm not here to scare you, to entertain you - or to bore you.

30. SFX: MURMURS AND GIGGLES FROM STUDENT CROWD

31. CHAMBO: I'm here to tell you the truth about drugs and substance abuse. Not because I'm being paid to do it, but because I am a former addict, and I'd hate to see any of you go down the same path. To start with, let me read you some headlines from our local newspapers.

32. SFX: NEWSPAPERS BEING SHUFFLED AND PAGES OPENED
(studio)

33. CHAMBO: (starts to read) Number of drug addicts increases in Chunga Sana. Alcohol abuse blamed for family break-ups. Public health sector battling tobacco-related illnesses.

34. SFX: NEWSPAPERS CLOSED (studio)

35. CHAMBO: I could go on and on.

36. MRS. CHACHA: It is shocking, isn't it. Maybe you can tell the students what drug abuse really means?

37. CHAMBO: Excellent question. Drugs are any chemical substances that cause physical, mental, emotional or behavioural change. So drug *abuse* is the *wrongful* use of legal or illegal chemical substances, resulting in physical, emotional, mental, or behavioural damage.

38. MRS. CHACHA: You said wrongful use of legal *or* illegal drugs. Do you mean to say that a person can abuse tablets, or other drugs they buy from the kiosk, or ones prescribed by a doctor? Like, say, malaria tablets?

39. SFX: HUGE LAUGHTER FROM STUDENT CROWD

40. CHAMBO: Drug abuse is drug abuse. In other words, yes, you can abuse legally prescribed drugs. I've just explained the definition of a drug, and when your body becomes dependent on any substance, then you've become addicted.

41. MRS. CHACHA: Mr. Chambo, isn't drug abuse a boys' problem? I've only heard of a few cases here at my school where girls were involved in substance abuse, but as for the boys... hmmm. Some of the ones who have just finished their exams, they smoked like trains!

42. SFX: SCATTERED CHEERS AND CLAPS FROM GIRLS

43. CHAMBO: It is true that boys are more likely to experiment with drugs than girls. But that doesn't mean girls aren't affected. Besides, statistics show that a rising number of women are taking up alcohol and tobacco, some of them when they're still very young. How many of you here know someone who has an addiction? It could be cigarettes, alcohol, khat, marijuana, heroin, cocaine, aspirin, shoe glue - you know, even tea and coffee contain an addictive chemical.

44. SFX: MURMURS AND MUMBLES AGAIN FROM STUDENTS

- 45. CHAMBO:** I get the same response whenever I ask this question. Almost all the hands go up. My own family had to kick me out of the house - not because they didn't love me, but because my addiction had got so bad that I began stealing from them just to satisfy my hunger for drugs.
- 46. MRS. CHACHA:** **(sadly)** My older son is the same. He does nothing but smoke and chew khat night and day. One time, he told me to my face that he would kill me if I didn't give him money to buy his stuff.
- 47. CHAMBO:** Your son, madam, needs help - just like I did, and just like many others who are hooked on drugs. I'm sure some of you here are already experimenting with drugs. I urge to stop now before you get hooked - and if you don't know how to, please see me at the end of this talk.
- 48. MRS. CHACHA:** Mr. Chambo, before we finish, could you please tell us: how do we know if a student, or a son, husband, brother, sister, or any family member is abusing drugs? What are the signs? Because with my son it came as a big shock!

- 49. CHAMBO:** There are some signs you can watch out for, but you should be careful not to jump to any conclusions before you're quite sure. Some physical signs of drug abuse are red or bloodshot eyes, changes in appetite or sleeping patterns together with weight loss or gain, and unusual smells on the breath, body or clothing due to bad personal hygiene.
- 50. MRS. CHACHA:** Ah, no wonder my dear son has lost so much weight - he doesn't eat like he used to. Are there other signs to look out for?
- 51. CHAMBO:** Yes, other behavioural signs amongst drug abusers, especially students in school, may include a sudden drop in attendance and performance, or they may suddenly change their friends, hangouts or hobbies. But the most common indication is probably an unexplained need for money, or financial problems. This may force them to borrow or even steal.
- 52. MRS. CHACHA:** Thank you, Mr. Chambo. It seems to me there's still a great deal we can learn about the dangers of drugs, so we'd like to invite you back for another discussion in two week's time, when students will get a chance to ask questions as well. School, let's clap for Mr. Chambo of the Youth Watch organisation.
- 53. SFX: WILD APPLAUSE AND CHEERS FROM STUDENT CROWD**

OUTRO:

As everyone in the hall applauds Mr. Chambo, two hands remain tightly crossed because their owner can't stop them shaking. These hands belong to Jabali. Is he simply nervous or still not 100 percent clean? Which path is he going to choose? With all the drugs now coming in, can Chambo win this war? And what about Beri? Will she be strong enough to arrest her own husband? Remember, she found hard drugs in his drawer. To find out, tune in for the next episode of this radio drama series about drugs and substance abuse. And if you'd like to listen to this episode again, you can do so at [d world dot d e slash I b e](http://dworld.de/ibe). Until next time - goodbye.