

Learning by Ear 2011/2012 – Corruption – The Elephant in the Room

Episode 05 – "Can They 'Stop Corruption Now'?"

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CHARACTERS:

- NARRATOR

Scene 1:

- Jeffrey (MALE, 58)
- Journalist 1 (FEMALE, 30)
- Journalist 2 (MALE, 30)
- Journalist 3 (FEMALE, 25)
- 2-3 more journalists

Scene 2:

- Jeffrey (MALE, 58)
- Sylvia (FEMALE, 19)
- NARRATOR

Scene 3

- Isaac (MALE, 22)
- Peter (MALE, 25)

Intro:

0. Narrator: Welcome to Learning by Ear and the fifth episode of our radio drama on corruption, "The Elephant in the Room".

In the last episode the Members of Parliament involved in the energy scam met to discuss the funding for the election campaign. They want to increase the amount of money they're making on the fake energy contracts in a bid to get their man, John Maina, into State House. They assumed Alfayo Odhiambo would be happy to continue supplying the electricity meters they need to make the scam work, but he refused. He plans to blow the whistle on their dirty dealings, even if this means implicating himself. But John Maina is still front-runner in the presidential election; in fact, he even had the cheek to announce on national television that he has a zero tolerance attitude to corruption. In this episode, called, "Can They 'Stop Corruption Now'?" the Odhiambo family's good friend Jeffrey Thiongo has founded a new non-governmental organisation to fight corruption. Let's join him at the press launch...

Scene One:

1. SFX: **Press conference, Photo cameras clicking**

2. Jeffrey: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen of the press. Thank you so much for your support, and for coming along to the first press conference of our new organisation, "Stop Corruption Now". As you know, there's a lot that needs to be done to rid this country of corruption, but we're going to do our very best to make this happen. I think I'll just start by answering your questions...

3. Journalist 1: Mr Thiongo, we heard you were sacked from the Anti-Corruption Board. Can you explain why?

4. Jeffrey: Yes, I can. I discovered that many of the cases I was researching and putting forward for investigation would go straight to the bottom of the pile. Sometimes files would even go missing.

5. Journalist 1: You mean they actually disappeared?

6. Jeffrey: Yes, exactly. And then I came across a huge energy scam. I discovered that a number of companies had been created and that they've been given energy contracts to supply the national electricity grid. Yet I couldn't physically get hold of any of these companies. In fact they didn't seem to exist at all, yet they'd been awarded contracts worth tens of thousands of dollars.

9. Journalist 3: So why haven't we heard about this before?

10. Jeffrey: Because the Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Board buried the case. When I asked for it to be looked into and re-opened for investigation, he told me that my work wasn't good enough, and sacked me.

11. Journalist 3: So you think the Chairman of the Board is also in on the scam?

12. Jeffery: Yes, I believe he is.

13. Journalist 2: Who else do you think is involved?

14. Jeffrey: I believe this goes right to the top of the Energy Ministry. There must be Members of Parliament involved in this scam, or it would never have succeeded in the first place. And I think it's going to get even bigger with the elections coming up.

15. Journalist 1: These are very serious accusations. Do you have any evidence to support your claims?

16. Jeffrey: Yes, I do. I have documentary proof of the evidence I've uncovered so far, and we'll be providing you with copies at the end of the press conference.

KW Anfang

17. Journalist 2: Apart from this energy scam, are there more cases that your new NGO Stop Corruption Now plans to investigate and report on?

18. Jeffrey: Absolutely. We have the full support of the international community and of our international donors - in fact, we've even received financial support from them to pursue our investigations. It's going to be a very busy time for us, uncovering and exposing all the dirty dealings that go on in this country.

KW Ende

19. Journalist 3: Mr Thiongo, we know you receive support from foreign donors - but what could the people of *this* country do to 'Stop Corruption Now'?

20. Jeffrey: First, we need some of the people involved in this energy scam to come forward. We need as many witnesses and as much evidence as possible to help us prosecute those responsible.

21. Journalist 1: Why don't *you* run for parliament, Mr Thiongo?! (**laughs, cheers, shouts of approval**)

22. Jeffrey: Oh, I don't think I'm ready for that! Let's just take things one step at a time... If you need more information, Sylvia will be happy to give you copies of our latest reports. She'll also handle any interview requests. Thank you all for coming. **(gets up to leave room)**

23. SFX: photo cameras clicking

End of Scene One

Scene Two:

24. Atmo: In a café

25. Sylvia: Well, Jeffrey, I think we've earned a nice cup of coffee. That press conference went well, didn't it? Most of the journalists seem to support us. I think we're going to get some great coverage. And if we've got the press behind us it'll make life a whole lot easier.

26. Jeffrey: Yes, Sylvia - so far so good! I actually think corruption is one thing the press are always keen to hear about. It's usually a good story for them. After all, nothing sells papers like sex and crime. **(laughter)**

27. Sylvia: Yes, I suppose so. **(laughter)**.

KW begins I never imagined this would take off so quickly. I feel a bit overwhelmed. We've got so much work to do.

28. Jeffrey: Yes, we certainly do, Sylvia. But we also have a mission! So let's get to work. **(enthusiastic)** Let's Stop Corruption Now!

KW ends

29. Sylvia: What about that last question, Jeffrey? (**shy**) Running for parliament. Would you really consider it?

30. Jeffrey: Where on earth did that question come from? It took me completely by surprise. It's not something I've ever really considered. Well, you know - never say never... But we've got far too much work at the moment with the new organisation. Let's stay focused, Sylvia!

End of Scene Two

31. Narrator: Fortunately, Jeffrey has the support of the press. They're not afraid to expose corrupt activities and to name the people involved. In many countries, this is one of the problems. If the media are controlled by the government, most journalists and editors are too scared to do their jobs properly and expose corruption, because they fear for their lives and their livelihoods. Let's find out what's been happening to Isaac, the son of the Odhiambo family. Isaac is studying law, and he works part-time at a law firm.

Scene Three:

32. Atmo: **Office noises**

33. Isaac: So, Peter, here are the CVs we have to go through for my boss. Just so we're clear on this: what we're looking for is a new associate lawyer. Ten years experience, and all the usual qualifications. Then we'll look for any outstanding qualities... Those are the boss's instructions.

34. Peter: Sure, Isaac. That sounds pretty straightforward.

35. Isaac: So in this pile here... **(he picks up a pile of papers):**

36. SFX: **Picking up a pile of papers**

37. Isaac: ... are the people who made it through my initial selection. We'll go through all the CVs in a minute and pick out the top twenty to invite for interview.

38. SFX: **Rustles papers**

39. Isaac: This pile here (**rustles papers**) are the ones who aren't up to scratch, so we need to send them letters of rejection.

KW begins

40. Peter: Okay, cool.

41. Isaac: (**shouting to neighbouring office**) Mary, we're going to have a lot of letters for you to type up this afternoon, to the applicants for the new position. I'll bring them over to your desk later.

KW ends

42. SFX **Rustling of paper**

43. Isaac: (**annoyed, shouting at Peter**) Hey, Peter, what are you doing?

44. Peter: Calm down, Isaac! I'm just looking through your reject pile. You know, I really think we should invite a few of these guys for an interview.

- 45. Isaac:** But they don't have even the basic experience needed for the job! Look - **(picking up a paper)** - This guy, for example. He only qualified four years ago. This other one you've picked out has huge gaps in his CV. It doesn't match up with what he's put in his covering letter. That's why they're in the reject pile.
- 47. Peter:** Sorry, Isaac. I have to disagree. These two are top candidates for the job.
- 48. Isaac:** What? You're not seriously putting them forward? Why?
(Wondering)
- 49. Peter:** Oh, come on, Isaac... Wake up to the real world, they are from my family. If I can get them an interview, they'll help me out when I'm looking for my next job. That's how it works. That's how I got my job. Keep it in the family. You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours.
- 50. Isaac:** But that's not getting ahead on merit. That's corruption!

51. Peter: So how did you get this job? On merit? Got good grades, then just got lucky with your application? Mmmm... I doubt it.

52. Isaac: I did get the grades, actually! And... well, my dad's friend told me where I could apply for a job. But that's all. It's not as if he pulled any strings for me - I had good results.

53. Peter: Wake up, Isaac. You got here the same way these guys will get here. It's *who* you know that counts. And, believe it or not, the system is not going to change any time soon!

End of Scene Three

MUSIC (FADE UNDER OUTRO)

54. NARRATOR: Well, as we've heard, it's ingrained attitudes like this that keep corruption going. Isaac is just a small cog in a very big machine. Is he strong enough to stand firm and stick to his principles? Does he really believe there can be such a thing as a zero corruption society?

With this question, we've reached the end of the fifth episode of our radio drama on corruption, "The Elephant in the Room", based on real-life stories.

In the next episode, we'll find out what happens when Lydia Odhiambo confronts her teacher about her grades; and two members of the Odhiambo family take their cases to Jeffrey's new NGO, Stop Corruption Now. If you'd like to hear this programme again, please visit our website at www.dw.de/lbe. You can also discuss or comment this episode on our Facebook page.

Goodbye for now, and thanks for listening!