

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

Episode 07 – "Crooks, Detectives, and a New Politician"

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Intro & Outro:

- NARRATOR

Scene 1:

- Sylvia (FEMALE, 19)
- Jeffrey (MALE, 58)
- Answering machine (FEMALE, 30)
- Anonymous (MALE, 50)
- NARRATOR

Scene 2:

- Lydia (FEMALE, 16)
- Tekla (FEMALE, 16)
- Miss Tatu (FEMALE, 43)

Intro:

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

Throughout the ten episodes we're following the Odhiambo family and their friend Jeffrey in their struggle against corruption. In the last episode Lydia Odhiambo and her friend Tekla discovered that their teacher was taking bribes. They want Jeffrey Thiongo and his pressure group "Stop Corruption Now" to investigate, but they need to get some proof... Meanwhile, Alfayo Odhiambo, Lydia's father, has agreed to provide Jeffrey's anti-corruption organisation with first-hand evidence about the high-profile energy scam.

In this episode, called "Crooks, Detectives, and a New Politician", Jeffrey starts to seriously consider going into politics, while Lydia and Tekla are doing some undercover detective work. Let's go first to the office of Jeffrey's organisation, Stop Corruption Now.

Scene One:

1. Atmo: **Office sounds**

2. SFX: **Door opening**

3. Jeffrey: **(shouting)** Sylvia, please could you listen to the messages on the answering machine? I'm just looking through the papers. We've had some great press. And I think that interview we did for Easy FM is on the radio this morning around 11 - we must remember to listen...

4. Sylvia: Sure. I'm just making coffee. Do you want one?

5. Jeffrey: Oh, yes. Just milk, please.

6. Sylvia: Wow, we've got a lot of messages!

7. SFX: **Answering machine beep**

8. Answering Machine: You have ten new messages. First message:

Today, eight fourteen AM:

9. Anonymous: (recorded on answering machine) *"You might be getting a hero's welcome in some parts of this country. But I can tell you you're not liked in others. Back off. Drop your investigations and close down your organisation. Remember the last guy who tried to stick his nose into other people's business? He died in a car crash. We wouldn't want that to happen to you, now, would we, Jeffrey?"*

10. SFX: Answering machine beep

11. Answering Machine: Next message, today, nine eleven AM --
(stopped)

12. Sylvia: Oh my god, Jeffrey! Did you hear that?

13. Jeffrey: Yes, I did. (**worried**) And that's not the first death threat, either.

- 14. Sylvia:** What? You haven't told me about any others.
- 15. Jeffrey:** No. It's about the third. There was one stuck to my windscreen last week. And I think the same guys paid a visit to my house at the weekend. When I came home there was a message scrawled all over my bathroom mirror - along the same lines as that one on the answering machine.
- 16. Sylvia:** Jeffrey! Aren't you scared? Maybe we should slow down a bit... Maybe we should think about whether it's really worth going ahead with all this, if it's putting your life at risk...
- 17. Jeffrey:** I have thought about it, Sylvia. But what else would I do? I'm in too deep. I know far too much already. Even if I did close down the organisation, they'd probably kill me off anyway just to make sure I kept my mouth shut. So I don't really have a choice.

18. Sylvia: When you put it like that, I guess you're right. So what do we do?

19. Jeffrey: You know what? I've been thinking more seriously about the question the journalist asked the other day.

20. Sylvia: About you running for parliament?

21. Jeffrey: Yes. I almost feel that, with all the threats I'm getting, it's got to the point where I need to up my profile rather than lower it.

22. Sylvia: I see what you mean,,. If you put yourself even more in the public eye, it'll actually make it harder for these people to threaten you, or even do something to you.

- 23. Jeffrey:** Exactly. Oh, and of course once I get in to parliament I can take a slice of the "pie" for myself... **(laughter)** Don't worry, Sylvia, I'm only joking. But, you know, unfortunately that's what most politicians do when they run for office. First they promise to end corruption, then once they get in they just take whatever they can. It would be really hard to convince people that I'm any different - that I'm really serious about tackling corruption.
- 24. Sylvia:** But running for parliament... Is that really something you'd want to do? I mean, do you really believe you could get stuff done, and make a difference?
- 25. Jeffrey:** Yes, I do. And I hope I'd be able to convince people that it's not just lip service - that I want to take real action.
- 26. Sylvia:** Well, with your background, and the work you're doing with Stop Corruption Now, I think people will see that you do mean what you say. **(convinced)** They'll be behind you, Jeffrey!

27. Jeffrey: You know... I think I should give it a go. Will you help me, Sylvia? If I could get in to parliament I'd be in a position to actually start changing the system... It'll be a tough few weeks, though. If I'm going to do this, I'll really need your support!

28. Sylvia: Of course. Let's do it. Let's get you into parliament. Then you can fight corruption from the inside.

End of Scene One

29. Narrator: Perhaps Jeffrey should have taken the death threats to the police... But the police are often either unable or unwilling to investigate – especially if powerful or wealthy people are involved. Even the police can be paid off; Jeffrey knows that. And he believes that in order really to fight the establishment and stamp out corruption in business and politics, he has to put himself inside the system. Then he can make a real difference.

But before we see how his plans develop, let's find out how Tekla and Lydia are getting on with their plan to record their teacher.

Scene Two:

30. Atmo: **Outside School Ambience, light traffic**

31. Tekla: Okay, Lydia, how do you feel? How's the wiring? Are you sure it's all properly attached? The last thing we want is for your recorder to fall off, or for it not to work.

32. Lydia: I think it's fine. The recorder isn't sticking out of my jacket at the back, is it?

33. Tekla: Turn around... No, it isn't.

KW begin

34. Lydia: Right. So, do we know what we're going to say?

35. Tekla: I think so. You're going to try to get her talking about taking bribes, but if you start getting angry - like you often do! – I'll interrupt and start talking about something else so she doesn't just throw us out.

36. Lydia: Yes, exactly. So kind of like the good cop, bad cop routine... I think I've got to be quite direct, though, because we want her to admit on record to taking the bribes. But if she gets angry she might just storm out and not say anything at all.

KW end

37. Tekla: Okay then. I think we're ready. I'm turning on the recording equipment... now. Right. Let's go in!

38. SFX: (School) door opens

39. SFX: **Walking in corridor**

40. SFX: **Knocking on the door**

41. Tekla: Hello! Excuse us, Miss Tatu. Lydia and I need to collect some things we left behind this morning. Sorry to disturb you...

42. Ms Tatu: That's okay, girls, come in. I'm just doing the lesson plan for next term.

43. Lydia: Next term... Right... It's going to be a pretty important year for us next year, what with university applications and everything... Tekla and I were just saying that we really need to up our grades. We've got to have good exam results to get on to the courses we want.

44. Ms Tatu: Yes, you do, Lydia. Well, it's always good to work a bit harder... Although, as we discussed last time, there are other ways, too.

45. Tekla: Oh yes, Miss Tatu. Actually, we've been thinking about that a lot since you told us about it. If our parents were willing to help you out a bit, like you said, is that a sensitive issue?

46. Ms Tatu: Well, since you ask: no, it isn't really sensitive at all. I mean, it's not just me who takes a bit of money – and please don't call it a "bribe", like you did last time! You make me sound like a criminal! **(laughs)** Maybe we should call it something like "grade enhancing money", or "special teacher support"... **(laughs)** In fact, most of the teachers in the school, including the headmistress, are happy to take a bit of extra cash in exchange for improving grades.

47. Lydia: Really, Miss Tatu? I had no idea. Just think, Tekla - our parents have been missing out on this trick for years.
(laughs)

48. Ms Tatu: I know (**chuckling**). Obviously, hard work is supposed to be the best way forward. But in times like these, when we're so poorly paid, it's the obvious thing to do, isn't it?

KW Begin

49. Tekla: So do none of your pupils actually get where they want to go – university, or college – without you or one of the other teachers taking money from their parents?

50. Ms Tatu: Look. It's possible they'd get there eventually. But it would take longer. Tekla, if your parents were to help me out a bit you'd be top of the class, without a doubt. You'd get into your first choice of university straight away, and everyone would be happy.

KW End

51. Tekla: But don't you feel a bit guilty about taking this money and putting your pupils' grades up when they don't deserve it?

52. Ms Tatu: Listen - if I didn't take the money and put the grades up, the parent would go and pay the headmistress, and she'd tell me I'd be out of a job if I didn't improve the grades. So either way I have to do it. I'd rather take a cut of the money. Wouldn't you?

53. Lydia: Mmmm. I guess I'd have to think about it... Oh my goodness, Tekla, we're going to miss the bus!

54. Tekla: You're right, Lydia! Thanks, Miss Tatu - have a good weekend. We've got to run!

55. SFX: **Two people running out of the classroom**

56. SFX: **door slamming**

End of Scene Two

MUSIC (FADE UNDER OUTRO)

57. NARRATOR: And that brings us to the end of the seventh episode of our radio drama on corruption, "The Elephant in the Room".

Have the girls got away with it? Do you think their teacher, Miss Tatu, suspected that they were recording her? And how will Alfayo's wife, Jennifer, react when he tells her he's caught up in the energy scam? Find out what happens in the next episode of our radio drama, based on real-life stories.

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Goodbye for now, and thanks for listening!