

**LEARNING BY EAR 2012**

**"I am still human – A story of Africa's mentally ill"**

**EPISODE 1: "It wasn't me"**

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**List of characters by scene:**

**SCENE ONE: KAPAKA WORKING AT THE SUPERMARKET**

- **Kapaka (m, 25)**
- **Mr. Patel (m, 40, Indian accent)**
- **Crowd (3 - 4 people, age and gender mixed)**
- **Customer (age and gender not important)**
- **Narrator**

**SCENE TWO: VALERIE AND IRENE AT THE COLLEGE CANTEEN**

- **Valerie (f, 19)**
- **Irene (f, 19)**
- **Narrator**

**SCENE THREE: MALEMBA AND CHUMBA IN THE VILLAGE**

- **Malemba (f, 35)**
- **Chumba (m, 16)**
- **Narrator**

**SCENE FOUR: KAPAKA INSIDE PATEL'S OFFICE**

- **Kapaka (m, 25)**
- **Mr. Patel (m, 40)**

**INTRO:**

Hello dear listener, and welcome to a brand new series of Learning by Ear, your favourite radio drama programme brought to you by Deutsche Welle. In the next ten episodes, we'll hear a story hardly ever told, about people hardly seen, because they hardly have a voice. And when they do speak, nobody seems to listen. Why? Because they have been given new names, like mad-people, crazy lot, gone-nuts, bonkers, bananas and many others.

This is a story of Africa's mentally ill people. We'll meet Kapaka, a young man full of hope and enthusiasm for his future plans with his family – until all hell breaks loose. We'll meet Valerie, a nursing student who all of a sudden has a mental breakdown. Then there is Chumba, a 16 year old boy who has never gone to school because of a brain disorder. How will their families and friends deal with them? What about health institutions and society in general? All this and more in this story called, **“I am still human”**. We start our first episode entitled, **“It wasn't me”** at the local “all in one supermarket”. Kapaka, a recently married man with an expectant wife, works there as a cashier.

**SCENE ONE: KAPAKA WORKING AT THE SUPERMARKET**

1. **SFX:**                    **BUSY SUPERMARKET AMBIENCE**
  
2. **KAPAKA:**            **(cheerful)** Good afternoon.
  
3. **CUSTOMER:**        Hello.
  
4. **SFX:**                    **BEEP SOUND AS GROCERIES ARE COUNTED  
ELECTRONICALLY**
  
5. **KAPAKA:**            That will be eight fifty all together...
  
6. **SFX:**                    **MONEY HANDED OVER**
  
7. **KAPAKA:**            Wait for your change please.
  
8. **SFX:**                    **MONEY UNIT OPENED THEN COINS  
COUNTED**
  
9. **KAPAKA:**            **(Still cheerful)** There we go. Thank you for shopping  
at "All in one" supermarket, please come again.
  
10. **CUSTOMER:** Goodbye.
  
11. **KAPAKA:**            **(to next customer)** Hallo Madam...
  
12. **SFX:**                    **TELEPHONE RINGS**

- 13. KAPAKA:** Sorry, but I have to answer this. **(answers phone)**  
Counter number three.
- 14. PATEL:** **(Indian accent, on the phone)** Kapaka, can you report to my office?
- 15. KAPAKA:** Mr. Patel, there is a long line of clients waiting to be served.
- 16. PATEL:** **(shouts)** I don't care if it's the President who is waiting. In my office. Now!
- 17. KAPAKA:** **(to clients)** Sorry, counter closed. Please go to the next cashier.
- 18. SFX:** **COMPLAINTS AND CURSING FROM CROWD**
- 19. SFX:** **PEOPLE MOVING TO OTHER CASHIER**
- 20. NARRATOR:** One thing Kapaka and his fellow workers know about their boss Mr. Patel is that the customer always comes first. This sudden outburst over the phone can mean only one thing: something is terribly wrong. As Kapaka makes his way to Patel's office, in another part of the city, Valerie, a young medical nursing student is having lunch with her friend Irene at the college canteen...

**SCENE TWO: VALERIE AND IRENE AT THE COLLEGE CANTEEN**

- 21. ATMO:** COLLEGE CANTEEN AMBIENCE
- 22. IRENE:** **(takes deep breath)** Phew, feels good to be out of the surgery training room. Sometimes I wonder if this is really what I want to do. Valerie, did you always want to be a nurse?
- 23. VALERIE:** **(absent-minded)** What!?! The surgery? Irene, I think you did very well. It takes time to get used to it.  
**(in pain)** Aaah!
- 24. IRENE:** Are you okay, Valerie? **(concerned)** You didn't even understand what I said, did you? I asked you if you always wanted to become a nurse.
- 25. VALERIE:** **(strangely)** Me? Nurse? No, I want to be a doctor!
- 26. IRENE:** **(confused)** Okay, so apart from being the best nursing student, you want to be a doctor now?
- 27. VALERIE:** **(emphasis)** Brain surgeon! No! Doctor! Mmmh... Yes, I will be a flying doctor.
- 28. IRENE:** You are acting very strange, Valerie. Eat something, it's probably the nausea. It will disappear.

- 29. SFX:** **CUTLERY SOUNDS AS WHEN PEOPLE EAT A MEAL**
- 30. SFX:** **CUTERLY PLACED DOWN, PLATE PUSHED AWAY**
- 31. VALERIE:** I can't eat anymore. I have lost my appetite.
- 32. IRENE:** Valerie, are you sure you are okay?
- 33. VALERIE:** **(brushes it off)** Irene, since when did you become a doctor? I am the doctor!  
**(short pause then calmly)** No, don't worry, my dear friend.
- 34. IRENE:** Val, are you sure? For a moment there, I thought I had lost you. You know like I didn't understand what you were saying. Please get some rest and take some medicine, we are at a crucial stage in our medical training. You can't afford to miss out.
- 35. VALERIE:** Okay, okay Irene...I will take some medicine.  
**(jokes)** Can we stop this now, Mama?
- 36. IRENE:** I am not joking, Valerie!
- 37. VALERIE:** **(suddenly angry)** Well, neither am I! Enjoy the rest of your meal.

**38. SFX:**                   **CHAIR BEING PULLED BACK**

**39. IRENE:**               **(shocked)** Valerie - wait! I didn't mean to offend you.  
Valerie...!!!

**40. SFX:**                   **ANOTHER CHAIR BEING PULLED BACK**

**41. NARRATOR:**   As in the case of most forest fires, it's a small spark that ignites a huge fire. Sometimes the fire may take days or even months to bring under control. That is if you have all the necessary equipment to fight it. Valerie is obviously not okay. Will she act before the fire gets out of control? We will see.

But now let's leave the city life and head to the village. In one secluded and poor homestead, Malemba, a single mother, is outside sweeping. Not far away is one small run down hut, and inside lies Malemba's 16 year old son Chumba. He is tied to a wooden bed with only a flat mat to sleep on. Chumba has a mental condition, that prevents him from interacting socially, and he behaves in a way not considered normal. But his mother Malemba has no clue about the sickness, she has a totally different idea of why her son is like that. Listen on.



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**SCENE THREE: MALEMBA AND CHUMBA IN THE VILLAGE**

- 42. ATMO:**           **VILLAGE AMBIENCE, OUTSIDE**
- 43. MALEMBA:**    **(Singing a sad song)**
- 44. SFX:**           **TRADITIONAL BROOM SWEEPING GROUND**
- 45. CHUMBA:**     **(screaming words that can't be understood)**
- 46. SFX:**           **FEET RUSHING AS MALEMBA RUSHES INTO  
THE HUT**
- 47. MALEMBA:**    **(rushes in)** Leave my son alone, you evil spirits! Go  
away! Go to where you came from! Leave him alone!
- 48. CHUMBA:**     **(makes more noises)**
- 49. MALEMBA:**    It's alright, Chumba, it's alright. They have gone now.  
Be still my boy, be still now. Mama is here...ssssh.  
**(calms him down with a song)**
- Silence**
- 50. CHUMBA:**     **(starts to scream again)**
- 51. MALEMBA:**    Mama is here, Mama is here...Mama is here  
**(starts to weep)** Chumba, be silent. Stop screaming,  
my boy. Mama is here, Mama is right here.

**52. NARRATOR:** Cries such as Malemba's in that lonely dark, grass thatched hut are echoed in many homes across Africa. Is there any help for people like Chumba? How can they get help when they are confronted with isolation, neglect and stigmatisation? Keep listening to find out. Meanwhile back at the local supermarket, Kapaka is standing in front of his boss and employer, Mr. Patel.

#### **SCENE FOUR: KAPAKA INSIDE PATEL'S OFFICE**

**53. SFX:** DOOR BEING CLOSED

**54. PATEL:** (**firmly**) Kapaka, you are fired!

**55. KAPAKA:** (**utterly shocked**) What!? Fired? Mr. Patel, are you serious?

*KW begin*

**56. PATEL:** (**seriously**) Read my lips (**pronounces word after word**) You... are... fired! Effective immediately, you are no longer an employee of "All in one supermarket". Do you understand? Remove your uniform and bring back your staff card.

**57. KAPAKA:** (**confused**) I don't get it. Why am I being sacked? I have not done anything wrong.

*KW end*

**58. PATEL:** Oh my! You are a good actor, maybe you should go to Bollywood... After stealing some of yesterday's cash from your counter you still have the audacity to stand before me and act as if nothing happened! You are lucky I haven't filed a case with the police.

**59. KAPAKA:** Me? Stole money? Patel, I swear...

**60. PATEL:** *Mr. Patel!* Don't Patel me, I am not your friend. I am your boss. Correction, I *was* your boss.

*KW begin*

**61. KAPAKA:** Mr. Patel, you know me. I have worked for you for almost three years, and you have never had any complaints from me or about me. Besides, I just got married, and my wife is expecting a child. Why should I do such a thing and risk losing my job? This is a mistake! I didn't do it! It wasn't me! It's a mistake!

**62. PATEL:** The mistake was hiring and trusting you. Now don't waste my time. Hand back everything that belongs to the supermarket.

*KW end*

**63. KAPAKA:** It wasn't me, I swear. I have never stolen even a cent from you. It wasn't me!

**64. PATEL:** Sure, it wasn't you. The money grew legs and arms, opened the cashier box, jumped out and took off. Kapaka, I have nothing more to say to you. Goodbye!

**65. KAPAKA:** **(in denial)** It wasn't me, it wasn't me. No... No... I didn't do it! It wasn't me.

**66. PATEL:** Thank you for your service. Goodbye!

**67. SFX:** **DOOR CLOSED ABRUPTLY**

### **OUTRO:**

That marks the end of the first episode of our brand new Learning by Ear series focusing on Africa's mentally ill people. What's next for Kapaka after being fired? Will Valerie's condition worsen? And back in the village, is Chumba really possessed by evil spirits? And if not, what is he suffering from? Is there any hope for such victims? All this and more awaits you in the next episodes. If you would like to listen to this episode again, or to other series of Learning by Ear, simply visit our webpage at [dw.de/lbe](http://dw.de/lbe). You can also follow us on Facebook. Until next time, Goodbye.