

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

Episode 04 – "Corruption: The trickle down effect"

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CHARACTERS:

- NARRATOR

Scene 1:

- Fred (MALE, 55)
- Mwichuli (MALE, 50)
- Karanja (MALE, 60)
- John Maina (MALE, 55)
- NARRATOR

Scene 2

- Alfayo (MALE, 58)
- Mwichuli (MALE, 50)
- NARRATOR

Scene 3

- TV Anchor (FEMALE, 40)
- John Maina (MALE, 55)
- Alfayo (MALE, 58)
- Isaac (MALE, 22)
- Sylvia (FEMALE, 19)
- Jennifer (FEMALE, 55)
- NARRATOR

Intro:

0. Narrator: Welcome to Learning by Ear and the fourth episode of our radio drama on corruption, "The Elephant in the Room". The experiences of the Odhiambo family are showing us how corruption plays a part in everyone's lives; but that it is possible to take a stand against it.

In our last episode, Jennifer was approached by the father of one of her pupils. He wanted to bribe Jennifer to give his son better grades. Jennifer took the matter to the headmistress, only to discover that the headmistress herself was corrupt. Meanwhile, the Odhiambos have persuaded Jeffrey, a family friend, to think about setting up his own NGO to investigate corruption. Jeffrey has found out about a huge energy supply scam, and he wants it to be made public before the elections. In this episode, called "**Corruption: The trickle down effect**", the members of parliament involved in the energy scam are meeting to discuss their strategy for the upcoming elections. They need money to fund their campaign, and the easiest way to raise it is through more corruption.

Scene One:

1. Atmo: **Noble Bar atmo, Talking, laughing, drinking**

2. Fred: John Maina, this is a toast to you, our future president! They said on the news that you're the front-runner. You're going to save our country – and hopefully line our pockets in the process! **(laughs and cheers all round)**

3. SFX: **Clinking of glasses**

4. Mwichuli: Sssh, Fred, not so loud! Be careful what you say in public.

5. Fred: Oh come on, Mwichuli, this is a private members club! We're all part of the same gang, members of the same tribe. We all know what's what and how to get ahead. We help our own. No one here will betray their own people.

6. Karanja: Hear hear! We all eat from the same pot, as they say! **(more laughing and cheering)**. Anyway, now we've got John Maina running for president our futures are secure, not to mention comfortable! But we need to get down to the business of how we're going to fund his campaign. Where's the money going to come from? Mwichuli, isn't this your area of expertise?

7. Mwichuli: Yes - John and I have been discussing this. We're going to get the money from the energy contracts. The scheme is working well and no one seems to suspect anything, so if we're on to a good thing, why stop? If it ain't broke, don't fix it - right, John?

8. John Maina: Right, Mwichuli. We seem to have enough people on board who are ready to play along. And as the current Energy Minister I can obviously throw people off the scent if anyone voices suspicion.

9. Mwichuli: That guy on the Anti-Corruption Board who started nosing around has been sacked, according to the Chairman. So I think the coast is clear.

10. Karanja: Right. Then I assume it's up to me to keep things ticking over. We've got that guy Odhiambo supplying us with equipment, which was a good move - buying his meters makes the whole thing look legitimate. We may not be generating any electricity at all, but we're certainly generating lots of cash for us! This is what creative entrepreneurship is all about: making money out of nothing. Hahaha! ...
(Laughter)

11. Fred: Yup, Karanja, looks like pretty plain sailing from where I'm sitting.

12. Mwichuli: If we're going to use money from the contracts to fund John Maina's campaign - and pay us for our time, of course - we need to make it look as if we're supplying more electricity. But that won't be a problem. And of course once John's elected, he can throw even more contracts our way...

13. John Maina: So, gentlemen. Here's to State House, and a brighter, even more prosperous future! **(laughing and cheering)**

14. SFX **Clinking of glasses**

End of scene

15. Narrator: Things are hotting up. These politicians and businessmen are completely shameless - they don't care at all about their fellow countrymen. They'll swindle anyone and everyone just to get rich. And the corruption comes right from the top. People don't usually do favours out of the kindness of their heart; very often they'll expect some kind of reward, or that a favour will be returned, either as cash or as some kind of advancement. And this is how corruption becomes firmly rooted in society.

Scene Two:

16. Atmo: **Minibus driving, loud music**

17. Alfayo: **(phone ringing)** Hello? **(shouting above music)** Hello, can you hear me?

KW Begin (without Minibus-Atmo)

18. Mwichuli (via phone): Alfayo Odhiambo? I need to talk to you.

19. Alfayo: Hello? Who is this? **(louder, to bus driver)** Hey, I need to get off the bus, can you stop, please? **(to phone)** I can't hear you - just a second, I'm getting off the bus. Hold on.

20. SFX: **Minibus stops, bus door slams shut, Drives off**

KW End

21. Atmo: **Street noises in the background**

22. Mwichuli (via phone): Alfayo. This is Mwichuli.

23. Alfayo: Oh... right. What is it?

24. Mwichuli (via phone): I'll be brief. The elections are coming up, and our Energy Minister, John Maina, is running for the presidency. We need you to supply us with another big order of electricity meters. What's the soonest you can deliver them?

25. Alfayo: I'm sorry - I'm not going to supply you any more, Mr Mwichuli. You've already involved me in your dirty scheme against my will. I'm not now going to help that crook Maina get in to State House. You'll have to find someone else.

26. Mwichuli (via phone): Think very carefully about what you're saying, Alfayo Odhiambo. We can ruin your business - you realise that? We can ruin your family, and make life incredibly difficult for you. I suggest you think again.

27. Alfayo: **(angrily)** I don't need to think again, Mwichuli. You can tell your thieving boss I'm not eating from the same trough as him. I'm out. And what's more - I'm going to help expose this scandal, even if it means implicating myself. I'm not afraid of blowing the whistle.

28. Mwichuli (via phone): Well, if I were you I'd think very carefully about you do next, Alfayo. Mr Maina has a long, long memory. He won't forget this. **(threatening)** And if you try to bring him down, we'll come down on you so hard you'll never even know what's hit you. **(phone goes dead)**

28a. Alfayo: **(to himself)** What a mess. What do I do now? I must tell Jeffrey, especially as he already knows about the scam - but can he help me now he's no longer at the Anti-Corruption Board?

End of scene

29. Narrator: Whistleblowers are people who find out about illegal activities and aren't afraid to tell the public or the police. They are often people with a strong sense of morality, who don't like the dishonest dealings they see going on around them. This is how Alfayo is feeling. He's determined to blow the whistle on the energy scam, even though he knows it could get him into big trouble. But he's worried about what's going to happen.

Scene Three:

30. TV Anchor (on TV): Welcome to this evening's programme. In our studio tonight we have John Maina, one of the front runners for the presidency. Mr Maina - one of the main issues under discussion at the moment is corruption. Is this something you'll tackle if you're elected?

31. Maina (in TV): Absolutely. My government will be clean right from the start. We will have a zero tolerance attitude to corruption, from the top right down to the common people. My government will be different. That's my promise...

32. SFX **TV turned off**

33. Alfayo: **(shouting)** That is utter rubbish! This guy is up to his neck in corruption, and he's not even in State House yet. Are people really falling for this? How can he say that with such a straight face?!

- 34. Isaac:** Woah, Dad, calm down! That's politics. They're all taught how to lie - you know that. They're all the same. And of course people fall for it. "His" people will all be rallying round to get their piece of the pie if he's elected. They know that if they get him into power, he'll help them. That's the way things work in Africa.
- 35. Sylvia:** God, Isaac, it's so depressing. Has it always been this way, Dad?
- 36. Alfayo:** I suppose so, Sylvia. It's just that when we were younger you didn't have a free press to expose the corruption. So we suspected it was going on, but we didn't actually know who or what was involved.
- 37. Sylvia:** Yes - but, Dad, even though we know who these people are now, they still get off scot-free! The papers expose their dirty dealings, but they're all still there - in politics, or working in big business. No one seems to be able to get at them.

38. Isaac: It's got to change, though, hasn't it? I mean, that's what we're taught at law school: that we'll get them in the end. Surely a new generation will come and wipe the slate clean?

39. Sylvia: Or will they be held to ransom by their tribes, or their own people, like everyone else before them? Maybe it's a cycle that simply can't be broken.

40. Jennifer: Children, that's enough of this depressing talk. Of course it can be stopped! You just have to stand firm and stick to your principles. That's what I always say, and that's what I believe.

End of scene

41. Narrator: Sylvia's asked the million-dollar question. Is it possible to stop the cycle of corruption? The Odhiambo family are starting to realize just how bad the problem is. They're watching the man who could be their next president on TV, and all the time they know he's up to his neck in corruption. How can things possibly get better? Jennifer believes you just need a few strong, brave people to take a stand and break the cycle. And that's what Jeffrey believes, too.

MUSIC (FADE UNDER OUTRO)

42. Narrator: This was the fourth episode of our radio drama on corruption, "The Elephant in the Room", based on real-life stories. In the next episode, we'll hear Jeffrey's plans to continue the fight against corruption, and how Isaac reacts when he discovers it's even going on in his office. If you'd like to hear this programme again, please visit our website at dw.de/lbe. You can also join us on our Facebook page.

Goodbye for now, and thanks for listening!