

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

Episode 08 – "A Whistleblower in the Family"

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CHARACTERS:

- NARRATOR

Scene 1:

- Jennifer (FEMALE, 55)
- Alfayo (MALE, 58)
- Waiter (MALE, around 30)
- NARRATOR

Scene 2:

- Lydia (FEMALE, 16)
- Tekla (FEMALE, 16)
- Sylvia (FEMALE, 19)
- Journalist 1 (FEMALE, 30)
- Journalist 2 (MALE, 30)
- Jeffrey (MALE, 58)

Scene 3:

- TV Anchor/Newsreader (FEMALE, 40)

Intro:

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

In our last episode Lydia Odhiambo and her friend Tekla secretly recorded their teacher admitting to taking bribes.

And Jeffrey Thiongo decided to run for parliament in the upcoming elections in order to tackle corruption from inside the system.

In this episode, called "A Whistleblower in the Family", Alfayo Odhiambo finally spills the beans to his wife, Jennifer, about his part in the energy scam. And will the press be interested in the school bribery scandal? Stay with us and find out!

Scene One:

1. Atmo: **Restaurant noise**

2. Jennifer: Oh Alfayo, it is really nice to get out for once. It seems like ages since we came out for dinner on our own. What a treat!

KW begin What will you have to eat? I like the look of the barbecued chicken...

3. Alfayo: Mmm. Not sure yet. I think I'll just order us a drink first. Wine for you, Jennifer?

4. Jennifer: Lovely. White, please.

KW end

5. Alfayo: **(clearing throat)** Excuse me. Yes. Please could we order some drinks? A glass of white wine, and I'll have a whisky – a double, please.

5a. Waiter: No problem, sir!

6. Jennifer: Alfayo! A double whisky already! Anyone would think you needed a bit of Dutch courage! Is there something you want to tell me? **(chuckling)** Now then... yes, I think I'll have the chicken, and the pilau rice with it.

7. SFX: **Putting glasses on table**

8. Waiter: Your drinks, sir. Are you ready to order your meal?

9. Alfayo: In a minute. Thanks... **(taking huge gulp of whisky)**
Actually, Jennifer, there is something important I need to talk to you about. But maybe you should have a few sips of wine before I tell you.

10. Jennifer: Oh - right... I thought you taking me out for dinner was a bit too good to be true. **(getting nervous)** Come on, Alfayo, out with it. What is it? Have you been having an affair? **(pauses and waits for a response, but there is none. Alarmed:)**
Alfayo? Is there another woman in your life?

- 10. Alfayo:** **(choking on drink and laughing)** Of course not! No, no, that's not it at all.
- 11. Jennifer:** Phew - well, that's a relief. Can it really be any worse than an affair? You look petrified...
- 12. Alfayo:** **(softly spoken, almost whispering during the whole "confession")** Well... it's about this whole energy scam. A few months ago I received a phone call at work from a Mr Mwichuli. Turns out he's the right hand man of the Energy Minister, John Maina.
- 13. Jennifer:** **(also in a low voice during this conversation)** Why in the world was he calling you?
- 14. Alfayo:** Well, it seems that the reason my business has been doing so well the past few years is because I've been supplying electricity meters to companies that don't exist.
- 15. Jennifer:** **(louder)** Companies that don't exist? What on earth do you mean?

16. Alfayo: (quietly) Sssssh... Well, that's how the scam works. There are these fake companies that don't actually supply energy to the national grid at all, because they don't exist and they don't own any power stations. By buying my meters they're able to pretend that they're delivering energy. And then they get paid for doing nothing at all. It's the same energy scam that Jeffrey uncovered when he was at the Anti-Corruption Board.

17. Jennifer: So he knows about this?

18. Alfayo: Yes, but let me finish. They called me to make sure I'd be happy to supply more electricity meters to these made-up companies. But by then I'd found out that they don't have a real address. The meters just end up sitting in a warehouse, while Mr Mwichuli and the Energy Minister and all of the bigwigs involved in this scam get rich from the fake contracts.

19. Jennifer: So that's why your business has been doing so well! It's part of the whole energy scam?

20. Alfayo: Yes. **(still speaking quietly, but insistent)** But you have to believe me, Jennifer - I had no idea I was involved. As far as I was concerned I was supplying the meters to legitimate companies. I had addresses, bank details. They even paid me on time - but it turns out it was with dirty money. It's part of the whole network of corruption that's driving this country into the ground. I don't want anything to do with it, and I told him so.

21. Jennifer: You did the right thing. But Alfayo - doesn't that mean that you're implicated in this mess? If it's uncovered, won't you go down with the rest of them? These politicians are bound to look for a scapegoat, and you're the obvious target!

22. Alfayo: I know. And that's why I've decided to come clean. Jennifer - I've spoken to Jeffrey and his people at Stop Corruption Now. I'm going to give evidence, officially, before a panel. They need first-hand witnesses to help expose what's going on, and I can give them the evidence they need.

KW Begin

23. Jennifer: So you're going to be the whistleblower?

24. Alfayo: Yes. I don't think I have a choice. I just have to hope that by coming clean and explaining that I knew nothing about the whole operation when I supplied the electricity meters, I can convince people that I'm not corrupt.

KW End

25. Jennifer: But what about Mr Mwichuli and his thugs? Won't they come looking for you? For ***us***?

- 26. Alfayo:** Probably. It could get quite nasty, Jennifer. But it's a calculated risk. I can't go on supplying them, but if it's all out in the open and they do something to me, it'll be obvious who's to blame. I'm just worried about you and the kids.
- 27. Jennifer:** Yes... Yes... Maybe... Do you think we should leave the country for a bit? At least while the story breaks?
- 28. Alfayo:** Where would you go? I have thought about it, but I think it's best just to sit tight and be careful. Jeffrey says that once it's all been made public his organisation should be able to provide us with some security, at least for a while.
- 29. Jennifer:** So how long have we got? When is the story going to break in the press?
- 30. Alfayo:** Just before the elections - in two days' time.
- 31. Jennifer:** **(big gasp)**

End of Scene One

32. Narrator: The net is closing on the Energy Minister and his cronies involved in the energy scam. Now Alfayo has finally told Jennifer everything, and "Stop Corruption Now" is ready to release the story to the public. But will they be in time to stop the Energy Minister, John Maina, from becoming president? Meanwhile, Alfayo's daughter Lydia and her friend Tekla are also doing their bit to stop corruption. They're trying to expose bribery in schools, also with the help of Jeffrey's organisation.

Scene Two:

33. SFX: Door opens

34. Lydia: **(out of breath)** Sylvia! We've got it! We've got the recording... Oh, sorry, are we interrupting a meeting?

35. Sylvia: That's okay, Lydia. I was just briefing some journalists.

36. Journalist 1: What recording are you're talking about? Who are these girls, Sylvia?

37. Sylvia: This is my younger sister, Lydia Odhiambo, and her friend, Tekla. They've got a bit a bombshell for you. I'm sure you'll be interested to hear it.

38. Journalist 2: What's it about?

39. Lydia: Why don't you all have a listen? Sylvia, can I just connect the recorder to the speaker?

40. Sylvia: Yes - here you are.

41. SFX: **Connecting recorder to speaker, pressing "play"**

41. Recorded part from Episode 7 played on recorder:

“Oh yes, Ms 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?”

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...”

42. Journalist 1: My word. I need to get a copy of that. The editor will love it!

Can we have it for the evening news?

43. Journalist 2: Me too....

44. SFX: **Door opens**

45. Jeffrey: **(door closing)** What's going on here, Sylvia?

46. Sylvia: Lydia and Tekla have just got back with a recording of their teacher admitting that she takes bribes. It's pretty explosive stuff...

47. Jeffrey: And why are these journalists listening to the material before I've had a chance to vet it?

48. Sylvia: I...I...I just thought I'd get the ball rolling.

49. Jeffrey: Okay. There are a few things we need to discuss with regard to this particular case. Number one: these two girls are minors. Their names must not be exposed. If you want to take a copy of the recording, you'll all have to sign confidentiality forms. Do you understand?

50. Journalist 2: That's fine, Jeffrey. We'll do that now. We won't reveal their names, we promise!

KW begin But I need a copy now if this story is going to make tomorrow's paper... I've only got a few hours before the deadline.

51. Jeffrey: Sylvia will sort out all the paperwork. Remember - if either of their names are released, there will be serious legal consequences. I hope you understand that.

52. Journalist 1: Of course... Jeffrey, do you think could you give me a quick interview about your hopes for the upcoming election? Are you confident you'll get in to parliament?

53. Jeffrey: I'm confident that the people of this country want to see an end to corruption, and if they do, I would urge them to vote for me. But you'll have to excuse me - I'm afraid I don't have time for an interview right now. Tekla and Lydia, come with me. I need you to play me that recording and tell me what happened, in detail.

KW end

End of Scene Two

Scene 3 :

54: SFX: *Beep - beep - beep* [Radio news opener]

55. Newsreader on the radio: This is the nine o'clock news. The Education Minister has announced a thorough investigation into widespread corruption in schools. Speaking outside his office this evening, he said that it was completely unacceptable for teachers to take bribes to improve students' grades. The statement came after pupils in a secondary school in the capital secretly recorded their teacher admitting to taking bribes on a regular basis in return for putting up her pupils' grades... **(fade out)**.

MUSIC (FADE UNDER OUTRO)

54. Narrator: And that brings us to the end of the eighth episode of our radio drama on corruption, "The Elephant in the Room", based on actual events. As all these corruption scandals continue to unfold, election fever is gripping the country. Does Jeffrey Thiongo stand a chance of being elected? Meanwhile, Alfayo Odhiambo is bracing himself for the fallout when he blows the whistle on the Energy Minister. Find out what happens in our next episode of this radio drama. And if you'd like to hear this programme again, please visit our website at dw.de/lbe. Meanwhile, you can comment or discuss this episode on our Facebook page. Goodbye for now, and thanks for listening!