

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

Episode 03 – "Strong Principles Needed"

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CHARACTERS:

- NARRATOR

Scene 1:

- Jennifer (FEMALE, 55)
- Mr Kitwara (MALE, 45)
- Mrs Mutua (FEMALE, 65)
- NARRATOR

Scene 2

- Sylvia (FEMALE, 19)
- Lydia (FEMALE, 16)
- Alfayo (MALE, 58)
- Jeffrey (MALE, 58)
- Jennifer (FEMALE, 55)

Intro:

0. Narrator: Welcome to Learning by Ear and the third episode of our radio drama on corruption, "The Elephant in the Room". In the last episode the Odhiambo's family friend, Jeffrey Thiongo, was sacked from his job at the Anti-Corruption Board. They said his work was not good enough, but Jeffrey suspects the real reason he was sacked was because he had uncovered an energy scandal involving top businessmen and government ministers. We also heard how Isaac Odhiambo was caught driving while talking on his mobile phone, and how he bribed the police officer not to take him to the police station and charge him. When he told his family what he had done, they were furious with him. In this episode, "Strong Principles Needed", Jeffrey has an idea for an interesting new project, and Isaac's mother Jennifer is put in a difficult situation at her school.

Scene One:

- 1. SFX:** **School kids playing outside in the playground**

- 2. SFX:** **Knock at the door**

- 3. Jennifer:** Hello, come in.

- 4. Mr Kitwara:** Oh, hello Mrs Odhiambo, I was wondering if you had five minutes for me? I'd like to have a quick word with you about my son, Gitura, and how he's getting on at school.

- 5. Jennifer:** Of course, Mr Kitwara. Come in and have a seat.

- 6. SFX:** **Sound of door closing and chair being pulled back**

- 7. Mr Kitwara:** Thank you. I really won't take up too much of your time.

- 8. Jennifer:** That's okay. We have about ten minutes until the kids come in for the lesson. Are you worried about Gitura's results in the end-of-year exams?

9. Mr Kitwara: Well... yes and no.

10. Jennifer: Right. Well, I have had a chat with him about his results. They weren't bad, but I think he could do much better. I did suggest to him that perhaps he might consider getting some extra tuition in a few subjects. Would you be happy for him to do this?

11. Mr Kitwara: Well, he's very busy, you know. He plays a lot of football after school, so I just don't know if he would have the time for extra tuition. I was hoping we could find a quicker solution.

12. Jennifer: A quicker solution? I'm afraid I'm not aware of any short cuts to getting better grades.

KW begins

13. Mr Kitwara: Well now, Mrs Odhiambo, do I really need to spell it out to you? I mean, am I not just asking for something you do for many of the other kids?

14. Jennifer: I don't do anything for any of the other kids, apart from teach them as well as I can. What are you suggesting, Mr Kitwara?

KW ends

15. Mr Kitwara: Well, I was hoping that a little tip might go a long way in helping Gituba improve his grades. I mean, as you said, they're not that bad - he only needs a little help. And I'm sure you could do with a bit extra – I mean, everybody knows that teachers' salaries are very low.

16. Jennifer: Mr Kitwara, if you want to get into bribery I'm afraid you've come to the wrong teacher. I never have and I never will accept money to 'improve' my pupils' grades. This is totally unacceptable, and in my opinion it's also an insult to your child's intelligence, if you don't believe he can do well in life without resorting to corruption.

17. Mr Kitwara: But I thought this sort of thing was widespread in schools? A friend of mine told me he couldn't believe I hadn't already thought of it!

18. Jennifer: **(angry)** It may be widespread elsewhere, but it's certainly never happened in my classroom! I think we should take this to the headmistress, Mr Kitwara. Please, follow me!

19. SFX: **pushes back chair and stands up, walks out of the classroom and up the corridor**

20. SFX: **knocks on the door and opens it**

21. Jennifer: Good morning Mrs Mutua. I have one of our parents here: Mr Kitwara, Gitura's father. He'd like to have a word with you.

22. Mrs Mutua: Ah, good morning, Mrs Odhiambo, and good morning Mr Kitwara! What can I do for you? Please, have a seat.

23. Mr Kitwara: Thank you, Mrs Mutua. Well, we were discussing Gitura's exam results, and I was explaining that I hoped there was something small that could be done to help him improve his grades.

KW begins

24. Mrs Mutua: I see. And what had you discussed?

25. Jennifer: Well, I suggested that Gitura could have some extra tuition, but it seems that he plays a lot of football after school...

26. Mr Kitwara: Yes, he does; so I suggested there might be a quicker way for his grades to improve...

KW ends

I assume you know what I'm talking about, Mrs Mutua.

27. Mrs Mutua: I see. Yes. Well, perhaps we can do something, Mr Kitwara. I will personally have a look at Gitura's exam results, and if you come back to my office tomorrow morning we can discuss this further.

28. Jennifer: But Mrs Mutua, you're not seriously going to accept money to improve Gitura's grades? That's corruption! That's not the way we do things in school!

29. Mrs Mutua: (ignoring Jennifer) As I was saying, Mr Kitwara, if you can indicate to me just how much help Gitura needs, we can discuss the details tomorrow.

30. Mr Kitwara: Thank you, Mrs Mutua. **(handing over an envelope)**

31. SFX: Envelope being handed over

32. Mr Kitwara: This is for you. I knew I could rely on you to give Gituba a little helping hand. I'll see you tomorrow. Thank you for your time.

33. SFX: door opening and closing

34. Mrs Mutua: Oh, for heaven's sake, Mrs Odhiambo, don't look so shocked! If this is the first time you've come across this way of helping students, you've been missing out on a lot of extra money. I suggest you try to catch up with everyone else.
Good day.

35. Jennifer: Yes, Mrs Mutua, I am shocked. I expected more of you as a headmistress. I expected you to lead by example. I have no desire to catch up with you - it's not a road I want to go down. I'm proud to be a teacher, and to teach children what they need to succeed on their own merits. Good day to you!

36. SFX **door slamming shut**

37. Narrator: It's a tricky situation for Jennifer. And it's the kind of problem many people find themselves facing: should they play by the rules, or take a short cut and get involved in corruption? Mr Odhiambo's friend Jeffrey has made his choice.

Scene Two:

38. SFX: **Cooking, table being laid, tv on in background**

39. Alfayo: Jeffrey, it's good to have you over. It's been ages since you came for dinner. Perhaps we'll see a bit more of you, now you're out of a job! **(chuckles)**

40. Sylvia: Dad, that's an awful thing to say. It must be really hard for Jeffrey, being sacked.

41. Jeffrey: Thank you, Sylvia. You're father's very cruel! **(laughing)**...
But he's probably right. I think that job had started to take over my life - and for what?

42. Lydia: But didn't you believe in what you were doing?

43. Jeffrey: Yes, Lydia, I did - absolutely. Until I started noticing that corruption cases I'd investigated and put forward for investigation weren't even being looked at.

44. Jennifer: You mean they were just being ignored?

45. Jeffrey: Well Jennifer, the bosses always made excuses about why we couldn't investigate. Too expensive, not enough evidence - or even that the evidence had disappeared. That seemed to happen a lot.

46. Sylvia: So you'd noticed that something was wrong... Why didn't you say something, or talk to someone more senior?

47. Jeffrey: Well, Sylvia, the problem is that, as I've just found out, the most senior person in the organisation, the Chairman, is in on it as well.

48. Sylvia: Really?!

49. Jeffrey: I'm afraid so. I only really realised when he sacked me. It was all to do with this energy scam I came across. Alfayo, you'll be interested in this - it's your line of work... Some senior politicians have been giving out fake electricity contracts. The companies they've paid to supply the electricity simply don't exist! I suspect that these politicians are all just pocketing the money themselves. You never know - the President himself might be involved.

50. Lydia: And you found out about this, Jeffrey? What did you do?

51. Jeffrey: Well, I took it to the Chairman, of course, several times. But the file always seemed to get buried. And now I know why. I think even the Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Board is in on the scam. These guys must be paying him not to investigate them. He's probably getting a cut of the deal.

52. Sylvia: So that's why they got rid of you – it's easier for them if you're not there to ask questions.

53. Jeffrey: Exactly, Sylvia. But I'm not getting to let it lie. I'm determined to get this out in the open somehow - especially with the elections coming up.

54. Jennifer: Why don't you set up your own organisation to investigate corruption? I'm sure you'd have support from all the donor countries for this. And people here would definitely support you. You should do it!

KW begin

55. Lydia: Mum, that's a great idea! Yes, Jeffrey, you must! I mean, what else are you going to do? These people won't give you another job if they think you might make trouble for them.

KW ends

56. Jeffrey: You know, that isn't a bad idea, Jennifer. In fact, I think I'm seriously going to look into it.

57. Sylvia: I'll volunteer to help you! I'm applying to university right now, and I could do with some work experience. This would be right up my street.

58. Jeffrey: You know, I might just take you up on that, Sylvia. Let me sleep on it. You lot have got me all fired up! **(laughing)**

End of scene

MUSIC (FADE UNDER OUTRO)

59. NARRATOR: And that brings us to the end of the third episode of our radio drama on corruption, "The Elephant in the Room", based on actual events.

Jeffrey is determined to expose the corruption in the energy sector - but where will that lead his friend Alfayo?

Remember, his company also got involved in the scam involuntarily. Did you recognize that Alfayo became very silent after his friend Jeffrey started talking about the scam?

Tune in next time to find out how the story continues. And if you'd like to hear this programme again, please visit our website at dw.de/lbe. You can also send us your comments on our Facebook page.

Goodbye for now, and thanks for listening!