

**Learning by Ear 2013**

**Crossroads Generation - Facing Tough Choices**

EPISODE TWELVE: Blackmail

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**List of characters by scene:**

**SCENE 1: NIKI, TRUDY, AND MERCY WALK TO BUS STOP**

- TRUDY (F, 15)
- NIKI (M, 16)
- MERCY (F, 15)

**SCENE 2: MSOTO AND LULU IN A PUBLIC MINIBUS HEADING HOME**

- MSOTO (M, 45)
- LULU (F, 40)

**SCENE 3: DAN HAS A CHAT WITH PRINCIPAL JULIETTE**

- JULIETTE (F, 50)
- DAN (M, 16)

**SCENE 4: MSOTO SHOWS UP DRUNK AT MUKARABA'S LATE AT NIGHT**

- MUKARABA (M, 45)
- MSOTO (M, 45)

**1. INTRO - NARRATOR:**

Hello and welcome to "Crossroads Generation", a DW Learning by Ear radio drama production about three young African teenagers, Niki, Dan and Mercy, who are all from different backgrounds. Let's look back at what's happened so far: At the police station Mercy's mother wanted to report her twin sons missing, but the officer didn't show much interest in the case:

**2. OFFICER (EP 11, 87):** "I'm sorry, but we can't help you. Please step aside, madam. Next!"

**3. LULU (LINE 91):** "No, Officer, you have to help me. I'm not going to leave here until you help me."

**4. OFFICER:** "I'm in no mood for these games! Corporal, take this woman and lock her in the cell."

**5. SFX PRISON CELL LOCKED**

Meanwhile, Mercy still hasn't made her decision. Niki and Dan have both declared their interest in her, but only one of them turns her legs to jelly:

**6. MERCY (EP 09, 109):** "Whenever he looks at me... and I look at him... I feel as if I have butterflies in my stomach."

So who is she going to choose - Dan or Niki? Well, let's see what happens in the twelfth episode, "Blackmail". Niki has reported Dan to Principal Juliette, in the hope that this will keep him away from Mercy. And right now his plan seems to be working. Mercy is expecting Dan to walk her to the bus stop, but Niki shows up instead...

**SCENE 1: NIKI, TRUDY AND MERCY WALK TO BUS STOP**

7. SFX: SCHOOL BELL RINGS

8. SFX: PEOPLE CLOSING BOOKS AND SCRAPING CHAIRS,  
STUDENTS LEAVING THE CLASSROOM

9. TRUDY: Hey Mercy, hurry up. Let's go! I need to meet someone urgently.

10. NIKI: Excuse me, Mercy... I was wondering whether *I* could walk you to the bus stop.

11. MERCY: Oh... Niki... That's very kind of you. But actually Dan's already asked me.

12. TRUDY: **(laughs)** Oops! This all sounds very interesting, but - sorry, Mercy, I really have to go. Bye!

13. SFX: TRUDY'S HURRIED FOOTSTEPS

14. MERCY: **(not amused)** Bye.

15. NIKI: **(surprised)** So Dan asked to escort you home? What did you say?

16. MERCY: Well ... I --

17. NIKI: Dan's not here yet, though. So maybe you should reconsider and let *me* take you home? I'm tough, I can protect you. Look at these muscles. **(acts out flexing his muscles)**

**18. MERCY:**           **(laughs shyly)** You’re funny. Have you seen him, by the way? Dan, I mean. He was called to the principal’s office and he hasn’t come back to class.

**19. NIKI:**           **(pretending)** No, I haven’t a clue where he is. And to be honest, I don’t really care. All I care about is you, Mercy.

**20. MERCY:**           Niki, I have to tell you something.

**21. NIKI:**           **(very excited)** Yes! Anything! I’m listening with my ears, my heart, everything.

**22. MERCY:**           Niki, I... I... I think I like...

**23. NIKI:**           I like you, too, Mercy!

**24. MERCY:**           I think I like Dan.

**SILENCE**

**25. MERCY:**           I’m sorry, Niki.

**26. SFX: FIST BANGING ON DESK**

**27. MERCY:**           **(screams)** Wuuui! I’m sorry!

**28. NIKI:**           **(furious)** Mercy, what is it you want? Eh? Is it money? I can give you money. What is it? Just tell me!

**29. MERCY:**           **(indignant)** I don’t want money, Niki! I just want to go home now. You’re scaring me.

**30. NIKI:**           **(very emotional)** So, it’s Dan. You’ve chosen Dan over me! A Laborian boy instead of one from your own country?

**31. MERCY:** That has nothing to do with it!

**KW BEGIN**

**32. NIKI:** **(swallows hard)** Okay. Okay, Mercy. It’s your choice. Your decision. Your loss. But I warn you, Dan’s not all he seems to be. I mean, you barely even know him, or where he comes from!

**33. MERCY:** I barely know you either, Niki!

**34. NIKI:** Yes, you do. You know me, and you know my family. My father employed your father as a guard at our house.

**35. MERCY:** **(shocked)** Are you the son of...? Of course! Jumbe. Niki Jumbe. I don’t know why it never occurred to me.

**36. NIKI:** Mercy, if it weren’t for my father, you wouldn’t be where you are today. You know perfectly well that no one else would employ a drunkard like Msoto. But my family was kind to yours.

**37. MERCY:** **(pissed off)** Go to hell, Niki! You have no clue about where I come from. Just leave me and my family alone.

**KW END**

**38. SFX: STEPS MERCY LEAVES**

**39. NIKI:** Mercy, wait! I’m sorry. Listen! I didn’t mean it that way...

**40. MUSIC INTERLUDE**

**SCENE 2: MSOTO AND LULU IN A PUBLIC MINIBUS HEADING HOME**

**41. SFX: ATMO OF PEOPLE IN A PUBLIC VAN**

**42. MSOTO:** (curious, in low voice) Lulu, what did you tell the police? Did you tell them about the baby? No - you wouldn't do that, would you?

**43. LULU:** I reported Banda and Kadu missing. That's all. Are you happy now?

**44. MSOTO:** Happy?! I had to bribe the officers with the little money I had left. So now there's nothing. Are YOU happy?

**KW BEGIN**

**45. LULU:** I will only be happy when I get to see ALL my children again!

**46. MSOTO:** Will you keep your voice down? People might be listening to our conversation.

**47. LULU:** (low voice) I don't care, Msoto. Don't tell me to keep my voice down. I've been doing that ever since I married you. It's time I finally spoke out.

**48. MSOTO:** (angrily) Are you even listening to what I'm saying? I've run out of money. We're back to nothing again.

**KW END**

49. **LULU:**           **(sarcastic)** You always run out of money. No, let me correct that. You always drink your money away! It’s no surprise.
50. **MSOTO:**       **(concerned)** But it’s different this time. You know, with this new house. How am I going to pay the rent, and all the bills? I’ve quit my job. How will we survive?
51. **LULU:**           **(indifferent)** Not my problem! Why did you move us out of the Tandika slum? And why on earth did you quit your job?
52. **MSOTO:**       My friends advised to me quit... It was peer pressure!
53. **LULU:**           **(chuckles)** Huh? Peer pressure? Msoto, do you realize how silly that sounds? At your age? If *you* make decisions based on peer pressure, what can we expect of Mercy?
54. **MSOTO:**       I have to do something. I can’t go back to the slum.
55. **LULU:**           That’s always been your problem, Msoto. You only ever think about yourself. What kind of a father are you? Or husband? Let’s not even go there.
56. **MSOTO:**       **(angry)** Lulu, remember who you are talking to! I am still your husband. **(to the driver)** Hey! Driver! Drop us off here.
57. **SFX: VEHICLE COMES TO SUDDEN STOP**

**58. MUSIC INTERLUDE**

**SCENE 3: DAN HAS A CHAT WITH PRINCIPAL JULIETTE**

**59. SFX: SCHOOL ATMO**

**60. JULIETTE:** Come in, Dan. Close the door behind you.

**61. SFX: DOOR CLOSING**

**62. DAN:** Yes, Principal? You sent for me...

**63. JULIETTE:** Dan, how do you find this school?

**64. DAN:** This school? I like it. No complaints.

**65. JULIETTE:** Good. Very good. I like to hear that all my new students, especially from abroad, are comfortable and feel welcome.

**66. DAN:** That's exactly how I feel, Madam.

**67. JULIETTE:** And what about your classmates?

**68. DAN:** They're okay. Most of them, that is.

**69. JULIETTE:** And which ones are not okay?

**70. DAN:** **(cornered)** Er... it's not that they're not okay as such, it's just that I don't get on so well with some of them.

**71. JULIETTE:** **(serious tone)** Dan Kanyama, this school is known throughout the country for good discipline and academic excellence. You've been reported to me for --

**72. DAN:** **(cuts her short)** No, Madam, it's not true.

73. **JULIETTE:** (**angry**) Be quiet! Dan, in this school and in this country students don't interrupt when they're being spoken to. Now I see that what I was told *is* true. You're stubborn and disobedient! Well, we don't tolerate that kind of behaviour at Bongo Academy.
74. **DAN:** (**apologetic**) I apologize, madam. I didn't mean to interrupt...
75. **JULIETTE:** (**strict and authoritative**) You will clean the classroom every day for a week as punishment! I will personally come in and check on you. And if I hear any more bad reports about you, believe me, you are not going to like it! Now off you go and start your punishment.

76. **MUSIC INTERLUDE**

**SCENE 4: MSOTO SHOWS UP DRUNK AT MUKARABA'S LATE AT NIGHT**

77. **SFX: NIGHT ATMO IN QUIET HOUSE**
78. **SFX: ELECTRIC DOORBELL RINGING**
79. **MUKARABA: (sleepy, annoyed)** Who could that be at this time of night?
80. **SFX: BABY STARTS CRYING**

81. **MUKARABA:** I’m sorry about this, my dear. Try and get the baby back to sleep... I will go and check this out.

82. **SFX: FOOTSTEPS WALKING AND FRONT DOOR BEING OPENED**

83. **MUKARABA:** (calls out) Who is it?

84. **MSOTO:** (behind gate; drunk, cheerful) Hey Mukaraba! Wake up! It’s me, Msoto. Open up. I have to talk to you.

**KW BEGIN**

85. **MUKARABA:** (annoyed, stays where he is) Msoto? What are you doing here in the middle of the night? Have you lost your mind? Do you have any idea what time it is? My family is fast asleep! I thought I told you not to come here any more!

86. **MSOTO:** (drunk) Mukaraba. You know they say time is money. But I don’t think that’s true. Because I have a lot of time, but no money! (burps)

87. **MUKARABA:** (very angry) What do you want?

88. **MSOTO:** Aren’t you going to let me in? We can have a talk over a drink, like real men.

89. **MUKARABA:** Stop wasting my time, Msoto. Tell me quickly what it is you want. You’ve already woken my baby!

90. **MSOTO:** Okay then. I want more money. (short pause)

**KW END**

91. **MUKARABA:** I’m opening the gate ....
92. **SFX: GATE DOOR OPENS AUTOMATICALLY**
93. **SFX: MSOTO’S DRUNKEN FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING**
94. **MUKARABA:** How dare you come here yelling like that at this time of night! **(low tone)** You want more money? For what? I already paid you! I don’t owe you anything. Go home. You’re drunk!
95. **MSOTO:** Hey! Don’t you talk to me like that. I’m the one who made it possible for you to become a father. Listen. I need more money. What you gave me is finished, and anyway, I don’t think it was enough. Not for my daughter.
96. **MUKARABA (gritting his teeth)** You’re not getting another cent from me!
97. **MSOTO:** Well, Councillor... you’ll be dealing with the police tomorrow. I will tell them you stole my baby girl. As from tomorrow, you’ll be the rich and much-loved councillor who took advantage of a poor man's misery and pressured him into giving his child away! I will tell everyone about this forced illegal adoption! Then we’ll see whether you’re still a councillor in a few weeks’ time!
98. **MUKARABA: (cautious)** All right, all right. Come to my office tomorrow. We can talk about this over a drink.

**99. TENSION-BUILDING MUSIC**

**100. MSOTO:** There’s nothing to talk about. I just want money. It's a very simple choice, Mukaraba: money, or police?

**101. MUSIC INTERLUDE**

**102. OUTRO/ MODERATOR:**

And that threat brings us to the end of the twelfth episode of "Crossroads Generation". Msoto is blackmailing Mukaraba – but is the councillor going to put up with it? And how will things develop between Mercy and Dan now that she’s confessed to Niki how she feels about him? Don’t miss the next episode of our radio novella. If you’d like to listen to this one again, or else download it for free, just visit our website at [dw.de/lbe](http://dw.de/lbe). And you can keep up to date with the programme by connecting with us on Facebook. Until we meet again - take care.