

Learning by Ear – Media & Information Episode 8

Learning by Ear 2009

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EPISODE 8

CHARACTERS

Announcer: Male/female

“Young Junior” Male, 15 years old

“Sister P.” Female, 16 years old

“Charlie” Male, 18 years old

“Ezra”: Male, 22 years old. Brother to “Young Junior”.

Politician MP Male, 50 years old+

INTRO

Hello and welcome back to the eighth episode of “Media & Information”, a Learning by Ear production. Last time, Sister P, Young J and Charlie met a lady from the Press Council who explained how her organization monitors professionalism in the media. She also explained that it is chronically short of funding and that it in no way can financially assist our novice journalists. In this episode our guys have an appointment with an MP, the Honorable Mr. Christopher. He seems VERY excited about the radio idea and makes them an offer almost impossible to refuse.

SCENE ONE

Youth centre, morning. The place is busy with young people playing different games in the distance.

SFX Doors opening and closing and footsteps on a cemented floor.

- 1. Sister P:** What shall we do, Young J, forget about Charlie?

- 2. Young J:** Well, maybe we can wait for him for another twenty minutes.

- 3. Sister P:** We could, but then we risk missing the man. You know, he’s a high profile politician, an MP and it’s a blessing that he invited us to meet him. It’s a chance we simply cannot mess up.

- 4. Young J:** That's the problem with Charlie. He refused to buy a mobile phone and now he is giving us a headache because we can't reach him.
- 5. Sister P:** Perhaps we should ring his neighbours and see if they can pass on a message for us?
- 6. Young J:** You know Charlie. He is always bragging about himself to the guys in the village. I don't think anyone will do him a favour.
- 7. Sister P:** Ok, then let's forget about Charlie and get round to the MP's office.
- 8. Young J:** We are actually already late. Let's go by motor bike.
- 9. Sister P:** That'll mess up my hair. We are meeting an important person and first impressions matter.
- 10. Young J:** Come to think of it I should change out of my rotten old jeans. Why don't you go ahead of me and I will join you shortly.
- 11. Sister P:** No! You can't expect me to go to that man's office on my own. You'll just have to stay as you are, and look, there's Charlie coming now!

END SCENE

SCENE TWO

SFX At the MP's office. The atmosphere is calm, with light music playing in the background.

- 12. Sister P:** Hello Sir, thanks for agreeing to meet us. My name's Sister P.
- 13. Young J:** I'm called Young J.
- 14. Charlie:** And I am Charlie.
- 15. MP:** What youthful names. Do I need to introduce myself?
- 16. Young J:** No, Mr. Honorable. Everybody knows you in our community.
- 17. MP:** Great. Would you like something to drink, a soda perhaps or tea or coffee?
- 18. Sister P:** Anything, Mr. Honorable.
- 19. MP:** Unless you say everything, saying anything doesn't help us make a choice.
- 20. Charlie:** We will have sodas, please.

SFX pressing phone buttons.

- 21. MP:** Ok. Hello, yes, can you fetch me three sodas please. Thanks.

- 22. Young J:** You have a great office.
- 23. MP:** Thank you. Well, guys, I happened to come across your proposal about starting up a community radio station in the office of one of my friend's and I was really impressed by the project. Whose idea was it?
- 24. Sister P:** The three of us thought it up together.
- 25. MP:** That's interesting. It is very rare to find a young group such as yourselves so organized as to come up with such a good project.
- 26. Young J:** Thanks for your appreciation, Sir.
- 27. MP:** I am Honorable.
- 28. Young J:** Thanks for your appreciation Mr. Honorable.
- 29. MP:** A community radio run by young people is a much better thing to do than indulging in drugs and alcohol. And your club is called ... C.D.C?
- 30. Charlie:** It is D.C.C. The Dot.Com.Club and the radio station we want to start will be called Dot.Com FM stereo.

SFX Knock on the door, silence and door opens, bottles and glasses on the table and opening sodas

- 31. All three:** Thanks.

32. MP: You were talking about the Dot.Com radio station and actually this is the main reason I asked you to come here. I have been informed that you have had problems raising funds. Have you managed to solve those problems?

33. Charlie: Not yet, Honorable. We have managed to find a good part of the budget but we still have shortfalls for some things we need.

34. MP: Well, I would like to support you in some way.

35. Sister P: Oh, thank you, Sir!

36. MP: Honorable and not Sir! Alright, that's decided. I will do that for you. We are here to support young people like you because you are the future of our nation.

37. All: We are very grateful, Mr. Honorable.

38. Young J: We have also submitted an application for a license for a community radio station and we have been told that the process can take a long time.

SFX: Knocks the tray and sodas go falling on the table.

39. Sister P: **(Upset).** Young Junior, what have you done?

40. Young J: I am sorry, Sir...no...I mean, Mr. Honorable, I didn't...

- 41. MP:** Don't worry. There are more important things in the world than spilt sodas. Now, tell me, you said this is your own initiative. You don't have any manager or patron?
- 42. Charlie:** No, it is all our own initiative. We are our own managers. We manage everything ourselves.
- 43. MP:** (**Laughs**) I like that. Are you aware that we will be holding a General Election in one year's time?
- 44. Sister P:** Yes, we know that.
- 45. MP:** That's good. And do you know how powerful the media can be in influencing people at such times?
- 46. Young J:** Yes, we know. The media can do both positive and negative things. It depends on how it's used.
- 47. MP:** Well, what I am trying to say is that I will give you all the support you need but during the campaign next year, I'd want to use the Dot.Com FM radio station to be my party's voice. What I mean is that only politicians from my party would be permitted to broadcast on your station.
- 48. Sister P:** Come again, Honorable?
- 49. Charlie:** Does it mean you want to own the station?

- 50. MP:** I want you to fully understand, guys. It will remain your radio station but people from other parties would not be allowed to appear on your programmes or be interviewed.
- 51. Young J:** Actually we are studying journalism at the moment and one of the things that have been taught is to give balanced information, and to avoid being one-sided both in programming and reporting.
- 52. Sister P:** Actually in short, that would be against the ethics of journalism.
- 53. MP:** **(laughs)** You are still young but as you get older you will learn to differentiate ethics from reality.
- 54. Charlie:** What does that mean?
- 55. MP:** Well, maybe, I should ask you this: why did you decide to set up a radio station?
- 56. Sister P:** We are bored of the programmes on the national station.
- 57. Charlie:** And the boring music it plays.
- 58. Young J:** And we thought this would be a way to play music that we liked or even our own music. And at the same time be able to cater to our community's concerns.

- 59. MP:** This is where I want to correct you. Everything you are saying is true but it is rubbish. Forget about having fun. At the end of the day you will want to eat well, travel around and afford nice clothes, etc. Who is going to provide the money for all that? Wake up.
- 60. Charlie:** What do you think, Sister P?
- 61. Sister P:** Well, I don't know if that is what it's all about.
- 62. MP:** You mentioned the license. Why should the license take a long time? Tell me, and I will get it signed for you in one day. It depends on how you use the opportunities that come to you. During the run up to the elections only talk about the good things my party has done and get paid for it.
- 63. Young J:** It sounds complicated.
- 64. MP:** There is nothing complicated about what I am saying. Think about it.

SCENE THREE

- 65. Ezra's bedroom. Night.**

SFX slow music playing and switching off the light.
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- 66. Young J:** Good night, Ezra.
- 67. Ezra:** You mean, you are going to sleep already?
- 68. Young J:** Actually, I don't want to go to sleep, I just want to meditate upon about our radio station.
- 69. Ezra:** You did not tell me about today's developments. Did it go well?
- 70. Young J:** Today was the best day so far, I think.
- 71. Ezra:** Turn the music off. I want to hear all about what you call your best day.

SFX: Bed creaking, music is switched off.
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- 72. Ezra:** So, tell me what happened?
- 73. Young J** Today, we were invited to MP Christopher's office.
- 74. Ezra:** Are you serious? That sounds interesting.
- 75. Young J.** Actually, I have not yet come to the interesting part.
- 76. Ezra:** Fine, go ahead.
- 77. Young J:** He promised to come up with the rest of the money for our project and any other things that we may need to run the station.
- 78. Ezra:** Really? And where's the catch?

79. Young J: You obviously know politicians. The catch is this. In return for the financial support our radio station has to become his party's mouthpiece. Only his supporters are to be allowed to appear in our programmes and we can only report positively about his party and never be critical.

80. Ezra: And what did you tell him?

81. Young J: Well, at first we hesitated but then got more convinced.

82. Ezra: Well, my advice is forget about this support. It will cripple your ideals and you will end up useless to yourselves and the community you want to serve.

83. Young J: Ezra!

84. Ezra I mean you will become puppets of the politicians. You will lose focus and objectivity and you will become corrupt. And then perhaps in order to avoid going to jail you will be tempted to broadcast false information. Dear Brother, you must resist the temptation of bribery if you want to profit from your dreams...period.

END EPISODE

OUTRO

Oops, well, that didn't quite work out the way it was shaping up at the beginning, did it? Basically, the MP was trying to put our journalists on his payroll to give him an election platform. Not quite the stuff they learned at journalism school. Is this a one-off or have you had similar experiences with the politicians in your country? Are journalists known to accept bribes in return for positive reporting? Tell us what you think at:

[dw world dot de slash ibe](http://dw.world.de/ibe).

We are looking forward to receiving your comments! Bye for now from the studios of Deutsche Welle in Bonn. Until next time.