

Learning by Ear 2011 – Road Safety

Episode 01 – Seat Belts

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CHARACTERS:

Scene 1:

- NEWSREADER (FEMALE OR MALE, ADULT)
- SAMUEL (MALE, ADULT 30-40)
- PAMELA (FEMALE, ADULT 30-40)
- ALICE (FEMALE, 13, Pamela's and Samuel's daughter)

Scene 2:

- SAMUEL (MALE, ADULT 30-40)
- ROBERT (MALE, ADULT 30-40, Samuel's co-driver, conductor)
- NELSON (MALE, 14, Pamela's and Samuel's son)

Scene 3:

- SAMUEL (MALE, ADULT 30-40)
- POLICEMAN (MALE, ADULT)

Intro/Studio/Outro:

- PRESENTER BEATRICE (FEMALE, ADULT)

- GEORGE – ROAD SAFETY EXPERT (MALE, ADULT)

Note: it could also be a male presenter and a female safety expert

Intro:

- 1. Beatrice:** Welcome to Learning by Ear and our radio drama series about road safety. My name is Beatrice and I'm going to be your host. Throughout the next ten programs we will follow the Wanjiru family. We will follow a period in their lives where they see and experience how dangerous the roads in Africa can be, with sometimes, tragic consequences. We will then talk to a road safety expert to find out how we can make travelling on the roads safer and, crucially, save lives.

In the first episode of our radiodrama, we will meet the Wanjirus at home: Samuel, who works as a mini bus driver, his wife Pamela, and their children Nelson and Alice.

Scene One: in the family home

2. TV NEWSREADER: The government announced today a strict set of guidelines to radically improve the safety on our roads after a record number of people died in fatal accidents over the Christmas period. One of the first steps will be to make it law for all vehicles – public or private – to fit seat belts and for all passengers to wear them or face legal action.....

3. SFX: **turning TV off**

4. SAMUEL: That is ridiculous – I mean how much time and money is it going to take to get all the mini buses and buses fitted with seat belts! I'd lose at least a few days earnings if I get the owner to put in seatbeltsand anyway, he probably wouldn't do it as he'd lose money...And besides that, there would be fewer seats in the bus, if everybody is going to starting wearing a seat belt. So even more money lost! Don't you think it's crazy
Pamela?

- 5. PAMELA:** Well Samuel, I don't know. I sometimes feel terrified the way you mini bus drivers race along like maniacs. They are always speeding, overtaking. Many of them don't seem to take notice of the pedestrians walking along the roadside. I've almost gone through the windscreen several times on the way to work when the driver brakes suddenly. But passengers don't dare to ask the drivers to slow down – they are too scared...
- 6. ALICE:** I think you're right mum. I sometimes wish someone would tell the driver to slow down. I did go on one bus with seat belts – but no one wore them.
- 7. SAMUEL:** Exactly, no one wears them, so what's the point, Alice?
- 8. ALICE:** Well, they must think that wearing seat belts is better. Otherwise they wouldn't be making it a law about it...

9. SAMUEL: **(angry)** It's just another way of getting money from us. I'm telling you, seat belts are a waste of time! If you crash, you crash. This "scrap" won't help you. Anyway, I've got to get to work. (to Nelson): Nelson, come on, we have to hurry! (leaving): See you all later.

10. SFX: **sound of door shutting**

Scene two: on the roads

11. SFX: **street sounds, cars, horns blaring**

12. SFX: **a mini-bus revs its motor, engine keeps on running the whole scene**

13. SAMUEL: Come on Robert, get that passenger in – we need to get going. Look that other mini bus has just over taken us and is going to pick up the group over there...hurry!

- 14. ROBERT:** OK, OK, get in get in, squeeze into the back - there's room for another one on that seat, move over. Fares please....
- 15. SFX:** **Noise of coins in Roberts hand**
- 16. SFX:** **sound of mini bus revving and moving off**
- 17. NELSON:** Dad, you're really going fast today – why are you in such a bad mood?
- 18. SAMUEL:** Nelson, I'm not in a bad mood. I just want to make as much money as possible today – I've got to pay all your school fees in the next week. And to do that, I've got to pick up more passengers.
- 19. NELSON:** Oh right, dad! It's just you're going quite fast and now it's raining and there are so many pot-holes in the roads...
Dad, look out there's a huge hole there!

20. SFX: **sound of cars swerving and a loud bang as the mini bus crashes**

Scene three: crash site

21. SFX ATMO: **Sound of people wailing and crying, police sirens**

22. SAMUEL: Oh my god, what's happened? What's happened to my mini bus? And where's Nelson? My son?!? My son!!!
Nelson!!! **(getting increasingly desperate)**

23. POLICEMAN: Sir, calm down. Please!

24. SAMUEL: My son! I have to find my son!!!

- 25. POLICEMAN:** Sir, please calm down! We'll find your son. But first you have to calm down. You've been unconscious. You had an accident and you were almost thrown out of the bus when you hit that other car. The steering wheel probably stopped you. Five of your passengers were thrown out of the bus. Two are dead and three are on their way to hospital. You're lucky to be alive.
- 26. SAMUEL:** No, oh my god. Where's my son? I need to get to the hospital.
- 27. POLICEMAN:** You should go to a hospital to have your head looked at - you're covered in blood. And you lost consciousness. But as the driver of the mini bus, we'll also need to question you and look over all of your paperwork later today.
- 28. SAMUEL:** Oh oh, people are dead? **(starts crying)** But it was raining. It was raining... I couldn't see that hole... **(screaming desperately)** No, no, no!!! What have I done???

29. POLICEMAN: **(authoritative)** Sir, calm down, please! This was a very serious accident. You're lucky enough, you didn't kill the people in the oncoming car. They were all wearing seat belts. And they got you out of your bus after you crashed and lost consciousness. But now, let's go to hospital. We'll accompany you there and after your treatment we'll do the paperwork and take your statement.

END OF SCENE THREE

SHORT MUSIC

30. BEATRICE: Well, as you've just heard in that first episode of our radio drama about road safety, it was quite a tragic day for the Wanjiru family. But what could have been done to avoid such an accident? With me in the studio is George, a road safety expert, who will discuss with me how we can make small changes in our lives in order to travel the roads more safely. Welcome George!

- 31. GEORGE:** Thank you, Beatrice. Listening to that episode of the radio drama makes me think of my daily commute into work. The first thing I do when I get into my car is put on my seat belt. It is second nature to me and I don't even think twice about it. It is automatic. And to be honest I feel naked without it on!
- 32. BEATRICE:** Have you always worn a seat belt?
- 33. GEORGE:** Yes and No. When I travelled with my parents in a car they would always make me put on my seat belt – even since I was a small boy. They knew the dangers. But on public transport it's much harder. As we heard, many mini buses or buses just don't have seat belts to use, or if they do, they don't work properly. And sometimes if you ride a taxi, drivers even suggest you should not use the belts.
- 34. BEATRICE:** Is it a good thing to make it law for people to wear seat belts?

- 35. GEORGE:** Absolutely. In Europe and the States it has been the law for years and if you don't wear a seat belt in the front and in the back you can be fined or arrested. And I feel it is the only way to make drivers and owners of buses make sure they have working seat belts in their vehicles. If they know they will be fined or arrested if they don't. In Germany before seat belt use became compulsory in 1984, less than half of the passengers put them on when inside a town. Some months after it became law and after the police started to hand out fines, almost 90 per cent of people fastened their seat belts.
- 36. BEATRICE:** But George, has it been proven that seat belts really make travelling safer?
- 37. GEORGE:** Yes, Beatrice. Definitely! Vehicles routinely go through tests and demonstrations to show how seat belts can lower fatalities in the event of an accident... Obviously other road safety factors come into play as well, like speeding, driving properly etc, but wearing a seat belt is one of the most important things.

38. BEATRICE:

But how do seat belts make travelling safer?

39. GEORGE:

If you wear a seat belt, the possibility of being killed or severely hurt during an accident is much lower. Just imagine that without a seat belt on, you could be thrown through the window or – if you're in the back seat without a seat belt - crash into the front seat. The seat belt protects you, it holds you back, reducing the impact of a crash. So everybody should wear it. Click it in, every time you enter a car, a taxi or a mini-bus!

40. BEATRICE:

Thank you George for coming into the studio.

MUSIC (FADE UNDER OUTRO)

OUTRO

41. BEATRICE: In the next episode we will find out what happened to Nelson. We'll also hear how the Wanjiru family narrowly avoids another accident as local drivers take more risks on the roads in another radio drama written by Victoria Averill. If you want to hear this program again, please visit our website at www.dw.de/lbe. Thank you for joining us and keep safe on the roads!