

Learning by Ear 2011 – Road Safety

Episode 06 – Enforcing Safety Measures

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CHARACTERS:

Scene 1:

♣ PAMELA (FEMALE 30-40)

♣ GRACE (FEMALE 70-80)

Scene 2:

♣ GRACE (FEMALE 70-80)

♣ PASSENGER 1 (FEMALE 20-30)

♣ PASSENGER 2 (FEMALE 30-40)

♣ SMALL CROWD OF PASSENGERS

Scene 3:

♣ GRACE (FEMALE 70-80)

♣ PETER (MALE 60-70)

♣ BUS DRIVER (MALE 40-50)

♣ BUS OWNER (MALE 30-40)

⤴ SMALL CROWD OF PASSENGERS

⤴ Intro/Studio/Outro:

⤴ PRESENTER BEATRICE (FEMALE, ADULT)

⤴ GEORGE – ROAD SAFETY EXPERT (MALE, ADULT) □

Intro:

0. Beatrice: Welcome to Learning by Ear and our radio drama series about road safety. My name is Beatrice.

Throughout our ten programs we are following the Wanjiru family and a period in their lives where they see and experience how dangerous the roads in Africa can be. I'm also talking to a road safety expert to find out how we can make travelling on the roads safer and, crucially, save lives.

In the last episode Samuel learnt about the importance of good vehicle maintenance after his brakes failed causing another accident.

In this episode, Pamela's ageing mother, Grace, decides she must brave the long distance bus service to come and help her daughter in the city.

Scene One: On the telephone

- 1. PAMELA:** So mum, are you sure you want to come to the city?
You're going to have to take the overnight bus and I know you hate it.
- 2. GRACE:** **(on the phone)** Pamela, I've already booked and paid for my ticket so there's no stopping me now. I'm sure the bus will be fine. I get on at 9 tonight... I'm going to sleep and hopefully I'll wake up in the city. What could go wrong?
- 3. PAMELA:** Nothing, mum. You'll be fine. So I'll probably send Peter to get you from the bus terminal. Just send me a SMS as you're arriving in the city. Safe journey, mum! See you tomorrow!
- 4. GRACE:** **(on the phone)** Ok then, dear. See you tomorrow. Get lots of rest. Bye, bye!

Scene Two: On the bus

5. SFX Atmo: **Inside bus humming along**

6. GRACE: Oh look, the sun is coming up. I love this time of day when it's half dark, half light... **(she pushes her neighbour)** That wasn't such a bad journey. We must be arriving soon?

7. PASSENGER 1: **(half asleep)** Sorry? Yes, we are. I think we must have about half an hour to go....

8. GRACE: It's been a pretty painless journey, thank goodness. I hate traveling, I hardly ever leave my village but I'm going to look after my daughter who's been in a terrible car accident... and my grandson and son-in-law actually as well. All in the same week, can you believe?

9. SFX: **BANG. ENGINE CUTS OUT**

10. SFX: **LOTS OF SCREAMING**

11. GRACE: Oh my god, what's happened? **(screaming)** What's happened!?

12. SFX: **LOTS OF SCREAMING**

13. PASSENGER 1: Let's just get off the bus. Let me help you! Have you got your handbag? Quickly grab it!

14. GRACE: Oh my goodness. Is that man ok? It looks like he got thrown out of his seat... At least he's sitting up and looking around.

15. PASSENGER 1: Maybe he's got a broken limb or something.....I hope we will get help soon. Where's the driver?

16. GRACE: He's over there. He looks in shock...

17. PASSENGER 1: (to other passenger) Sorry, do you know what has happened?

18. PASSENGER 2: I think the driver must have fallen asleep at the wheel. Why else would we have crashed into that traffic sign? I mean there's hardly any traffic on the road at this time.

19. PASSENGER 1: Well he hasn't had a break since we set off seven hours ago. Can you believe he hasn't even had a single break in that time?

20. GRACE: Why not?

21. PASSENGER 2: You don't travel much, do you? These bus companies try to save money by not paying for more drivers. Maybe this guy already had to do the incoming leg yesterday before he started our trip to the city. That would have been 14 hours solid driving with virtually no break. No one can stay awake and drive safely for that long.

22. GRACE: Really? That is criminal. I'm going to call my daughter and let her know. Maybe that's why Pamela was so worried about me traveling on the bus.

SCENE THREE: By the side of the road

23. SFX Atmo: Cars driving past

24. GRACE: Peter! Peter...I'm over here!

25. PETER: Ah there you are. I got here as soon as I could. Poor Pamela is beside herself with worry... Are you ok? What has happened?

26. GRACE: Well, everyone is saying the bus driver fell asleep at the wheel, which is why we crashed into a traffic sign.

27. PETER: That is just typical! Where is the bus driver? Is he here?

28. GRACE: He is over there with the owner of the bus. No one is telling us anything really.

29. GRACE: Peter, where are you going? Wait, Peter, just calm down!

30. PETER: **(angry)** Who's the driver here... you? What the hell do you think you're doing falling asleep at the wheel? Don't you realize you've put all these passengers' lives at risk?

- 31. BUS DRIVER:** Look, I'm an experienced driver. I think a dog ran out in front and so I swerved to miss it.
- 32. PETER:** That's a lie! All the passengers are saying you fell asleep. Where's your boss?
- 33. BUS OWNER:** Here I am. What's your problem, man? You weren't even on the bus. How do you know what happened?
- 34. PETER:** That lady over there, my relative, was on the bus. I came to pick her up. And she says everyone saw the driver asleep. How can you let this man drive without a break during a seven hour trip? I also hear he had done another trip before without a break as well.

35. BUS OWNER: Look that is normal. Everyone does the same. How can I compete with other companies if I employ more drivers? Anyway, he's used to doing two shifts in a row...

36. PETER: And what about your passengers' safety, you reckless fools?

37. BUS OWNER: What about it? They're all fine. Don't you start insulting me! **(goes to hit Peter)**

38. PETER: If you want to turn this into a fight... **(starts going for the bus owner)**

39. CROWD: **(sounds of fight, screams)** Stop it! Please, stop!

40. GRACE: Peter, what are you doing? Stop! You're going to get yourself arrested. Stop, I said!

END OF SCENE THREE

SHORT MUSIC

41. BEATRICE: Well, as you've just heard in the sixth episode of our radio drama about road safety, it's Pamela's mother, Grace's turn to experience how dangerous roads can be! With me in the studio is George, our road safety expert. Welcome George!

42. GEORGE: Thank you.

43. BEATRICE: Well, I guess we should start by telling our listeners that it's not just long haul bus drivers who fall asleep at the wheel. Anyone, if they drive for too long, without taking frequent breaks can fall asleep.

44. GEORGE: Exactly, Beatrice. The saying, "better late than never", holds very true when we come to talking about driving when tired. But the problem with drivers of buses or lorries is that they are under instructions from the bus or lorry company and so are often expected to drive through the night or day.

45. BEATRICE: So you mean a long haul bus driver could be told he has to do a return journey in a certain number of hours?

46. GEORGE: Yes. And breaks may not be factored into the overall journey time so the driver will constantly feel under pressure to keep going and not stop or take too few breaks. And then you find yourself in a situation like Grace. It seems her bus driver fell asleep at the wheel, and the bus crashed. In situations like this passengers can get seriously injured or even killed.

47. BEATRICE: So really what's needed is a regulated shift system so that bus or lorry companies have to make sure their drivers only take on a certain number of shifts and breaks are obligatory?

48. GEORGE: In an ideal world yes. But as is often the case in Africa, people would find their way round the system. In reality the roads are worse at certain times of year. Christmas, Easter, when companies double the fares and make their drivers work an unsafe number of hours. It is greed. But yes, essentially it all goes back to regulation and enforcing these rules and regulations so that passengers and drivers travel safely and are protected on the roads.

49. BEATRICE: Thank you, George.

MUSIC (FADE UNDER OUTRO)

OUTRO

50. BEATRICE: In the next episode Grace and Peter travel back to the house by motorbike taxi. We will hear how they are made to realize the importance of wearing helmets 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!