# english black

# Package 92, Script 3

November 2010

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**Zamana, or ‘The confession’**

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### Notes to broadcaster

Located in the Sudan-Sahel region, the fictional country of Manibu has a rainy season that lasts only three months. The problem of drinking water is very acute, and the problem of water for agriculture is even more serious. Consequently, irrigation is a useful practice to increase and diversify farm production.

For ten months, swamps were reclaimed and rehabilitated in Zamana village, which made villagers very happy. This was made possible thanks to technical and financial help from development organizations. Activity in the water sub-sector intensified. Today, the water sector has become a source of illegal gain for many people and companies working in that sector. Bribes here, promises there. And water is getting scarce.

The following drama gives us insight into the core of a system of corruption that afflicted Zamana village.

This script is a mini-drama based on actual interviews. You could use this script as inspiration to research and write a script on a similar topic in your area. Or you might choose to produce this script on your station, using voice actors to represent the speakers. If so, please make sure to tell your audience at the beginning of the program that the voices are those of actors, not the original people involved in the interviews.

**Characters**

Presenter

Madou: farmer

Mouta: expert in civil engineering

Bassi: opinion leader

Satou: farmer

Abou: president of the farmers' group

Belou: general secretary of the farmers' group

Fama: chief of the delegation

Bira: villager

Laré: entrepreneur

Monda: town crier

**Presenter:** Zamana is an imaginary village located in the Sahel, in the country of Manibu. The swamps that covered three quarters of its area made farming difficult. But one day, a government representative came to announce the good news: "People of Zamana, the government has charged me to announce that work will be done in your village swamp zone to allow you to diversify your production. From now on, in addition to cereals, you will be able to grow rice, maize and many other crops. Your government, that works for the peoples' well-being, has granted your wishes."

The people of Zamana gave a huge round of applause. A new era was about to start. Several months later, reclaimed farmland was made available to them. The swamp had been drained, a dam built, and flat farming land made available for farming. Most households received pieces of land. They immediately sowed their new fields.

You could see the hope animating the small-scale farmers with new farming land in Zamana. Everyone had a smile on their face. One farmer expressed the opinion of all the farmers: "Oh God, I thank you for all you are doing for me. This year, I thank you even more for giving me a piece of land. I will finally be able to afford a couple of oxen after I sell my rice."

But the people of Zamana did not stay happy for long. There was a big disappointment, as if a disaster had hit the village. After a rain which was no heavier than usual, the dam broke. Water flooded the reclaimed land, harvests were lost and hopes died.

But now, let me take you back to the happy time after the swamp was drained, the reclaimed land created, and before the dam broke. On one of those happy days, a farmer is visited by his cousin, an expert engineer. He can't wait to show the cousin his rice field. They go together to the reclaimed land.

**Madou (farmer):** (*Happily*)You see, my field is half a hectare. I expect a harvest of about two tons of rice. I am very optimistic now. I can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel. My ambitions are big.

**Mouta (expert in civil engineering):** (*Calmly*) Your rice field looks good and gives hope. I encourage you to persevere. As far as my sack of rice is concerned, I think it's a given. You guys have some good land, but I'm telling you this: the work is not complete. There is still more work to do.

**Madou (farmer):** (*Surprised*) Oh yeah? Why do you say that? Why did they distribute land if the work was not completed? What are you trying to tell me?

**Mouta (expert in civil engineering):** You will have the answer soon. I bet that the dam is not strong enough. It will not survive if there is a bit more water.

**Presenter:** Madou the farmer goes to the opinion leader. He wants to better understand what his cousin told him.

**Madou (farmer):** (*Sounding eager*) So, you who know everything, tell me if the swamp reclamation works are complete.

**Bassi (opinion leader):** (*A bit dazed*) How do you want me to answer this? Why do you ask? What do you know about this development anyway? If you are asking this question, you must think that there is something wrong. I don't understand what you want to tell me.

**Madou (farmer):** (*Disappointed*) It's fine if you don't understand. In any case, there's no rush. My cousin simply told me that there is still work to do.

**Bassi (opinion leader):** Oh yeah? What are you hiding from me? Your cousin is announcing no good news. But since you don't want to tell me anything, let's wait and see.

**Presenter:** On the reclaimed land, the rice is ripening. The farmers are busy placing scarecrows in the fields to drive birds away. They discuss how they will sell their harvest.... (*Short pause*) That night, rain falls on Zamana. In the morning, the people of Zamana are very bitter when they see the damage caused by the rain.

**Satou (farmer):** (*Panicked*) The dam broke and water invaded the reclaimed land. It drowned all the plants. But the rain should not have caused such damage. It was not as heavy as other rains. All my hopes are gone. Lord, have mercy on us!

**Presenter:** The president of the farmers' group summons an emergency meeting of the board of directors to examine the situation on the reclaimed land.

**Abou (president of the farmers' group):** (*In a serious tone*) Greetings to all. I thank you for responding to my invitation. As you know, the situation is very alarming. It is true that it rained. But the amount of rain was not enough to cause such a disaster. It is our responsibility to find out why it happened. And if need be, to determine who is responsible. The dam broke before the water had even reached its highest level. We are going to meet with the chief of the government delegation to report this situation.

**Belou (general secretary of the farmers' group):** As general secretary, I say that we agree with you, president. We support your plan. It won’t be easy, but we must do it. The situation is difficult to explain. I heard someone say that the development works were not completed. Would this explain the dam breaking?

**Presenter:** The next morning, the farmers' group president, general secretary and treasurer go to the capital to meet with the chief of the government delegation. Meanwhile, Bassi, the opinion leader, meets with Madou the farmer, who is heading to the village chief's compound.

**Bassi (opinion leader):** (*Calling Madou*) Hey, hey, hello! Where are you going, so early in the morning? You seem to be in a hurry.

**Madou (farmer):** (*Very impatient*) I'm going to the Chief's. He asked me to see him. I don't know what he is going to talk about.

**Bassi (opinion leader):** It's always good to be solicited by the Chief. At least you feel useful. I believe we now have understood what your cousin wanted to tell you. That rain was nothing extraordinary. It should not have broken the dam so easily. Tell me, did your cousin visit the reclaimed land? If he did, then he knew what he was talking about. He's an expert in civil engineering. He knows these things. This would mean that the works were not executed “by the book.” This is exactly what he wanted to make us understand. (*A short silence*) But we shouldn't jump to quick conclusions. Let's wait and see.

**Madou (farmer):** (*Very emotional*) My cousin warned me that there would be problems. But what could I have done?

**Presenter:** The farmers' group president and his followers arrive at the house of Mr. Fama, the delegation chief.

**Abou (president of the farmers' group):** (*Knocks at door and walks in*)Good morning, Mr. chief of delegation.

**Fama (chief of the delegation):** (*Merry*) Mr. President, what happy occasion brings you to Zaboudou? Please, have a seat. I hope everything is well in Zamana. I am listening to you, Mr. President.

**Abou (president of the farmers' group):** (*Sounding embarrassed*) Mr. Chief of delegation, to tell you the truth, nothing is well in Zamana. The reclaimed land is flooded. There is no hope of harvesting any rice. The farmers have become desperate. Anger is growing.

**Fama (chief of the delegation):** (*Startled*) What happened? Did the rain that fell two days ago cause damage?

**Abou (president of the farmers' group):** I don't know how to explain what happened. The dam broke following that rain. A rain like any other, not a big rain! We simply don't understand.

**Fama (chief of the delegation):** (*A bit nervous*) No, anything but the dam! That's not possible. The dam cannot break so easily. What amount of water could make the dam break? Mr. President, we are going to send a team to Zamana as soon as we can. We must know exactly what happened. Thank you for informing me of the situation. Go home and wait for us; we will come. Take courage, President!

**Abou (president of the farmers' group):** (*Somewhat comforted*) Thank you for understanding. We count on you to give hope back to the people of Zamana.

**Presenter:** Three days later, the governmental delegation is welcomed in Zamana.

*Noise of crowd*

**Fama (chief of the delegation):** (*In a calm tone*) People of Zamana, some time ago, in this very place, I announced good news to you. Today, I come to express the government's sympathy for what has happened. The government promises to take all necessary measures to repair the dam as fast as possible, and to provide assistance to you. The investigation team reported a problem with the dam. The quantity of cement and the quality of the iron framework are the cause of the dam break. The company will resume the work and respect all quality standards.

**Abou (president of the farmers' group):** (*In a worried tone*) We know that the government will help us. But exactly what will the government do?

**Fama (chief of the delegation):** We will proceed rapidly with an estimate of your needs and see how the government can help you. As of now, it is decided that the re-payment for the inputs you were granted for this season will be postponed to next season. In other words, you don’t have to pay back the loans this season. Be courageous, everything is going to be all right. I thank you.

**Presenter:** One week later, the construction company is back in Zamana to fix the dam. A villager approaches the entrepreneur in charge of the work. A conversation starts between the two men.

**Bira (villager):** You must not like our village. You must wish us bad luck. Otherwise, how can such a dam be swept away by a rain that was not very strong?

**Laré (entrepreneur):** (*A bit annoyed*) Oh, you people from villages. When are you going to understand? You don't know what pain we endure to work for you.

**Bira (villager):** (*Calmly*) I believe that you are being disrespectful to those who don't live in the city. Do you really suffer for us? We too, we suffer for you. It is because of our sweat that you enjoy cereals, tubers, and other food. We take our work seriously. When have you eaten cereals that were not ready to eat? But with you, we are used to school roofs being swept away or fence walls that collapse with the weakest wind. So why are you here today?

**Laré (entrepreneur):** Do you really want to know? Is it worth explaining this to you? You should simply know that as long as life is as it is, construction will be done this way.

**Bira (villager):** You see … I told you that people from the city look down on us people from the countryside. Do we deserve to have badly built things just because we live in villages?

**Laré (entrepreneur):** Who told you that the work was badly done? No, you didn't understand me. I didn't say that. Listen to me. In order to get this contract, I had to spend a lot of money. First I had to buy the call for applications dossier for the construction of the dam. Then I submitted an application along with others who wanted this contract. It is as the proverb says: *It is better to know somebody than know the village.*

**Bira (villager):** So if you don't know somebody, you can’t get contracts? Isn't the person who selects the winning candidate paid a salary to do that job? If you don't give him anything, what will happen?

**Laré (entrepreneur):** Who gives nothing receives nothing. You know that well! It would be as if you didn’t submit an application for the contract. You would get no contracts. It’s as simple as that.

**Bira (villager):** (*Nervously*) In what world do you live? We do not know this way of life here. What am I hearing? No, no, I will leave you to your work. But this time, do a good job even if I have nothing to give you.

**Laré (entrepreneur):** (*Begging*) Don't go. My story is not over. I want to simply share with you what kind of pains and difficulties we experience as entrepreneurs.

**Bira (villager):** I don't like your story. It is full of things that violate ethics and morals.

**Laré (entrepreneur):** Do you mean I don't have good morals? No, I am not a bad guy. I will tell you the story of most entrepreneurs.

**Bira (villager):** (*Conciliatory*) Okay, tell me.

**Laré (entrepreneur):** As I was saying, it is better to know somebody than know the village. So, I gave some money to the people who examine applications so that my submission would be considered. I won't say how much, but it was a lot of money. Other entrepreneurs also wanted to get this contract. They did the same thing as me. But I was luckier. My application was accepted.

**Bira (villager):** What you’re telling me doesn’t explain the poor quality of the work the government says you’re responsible for.

**Laré (entrepreneur):** You're right. The story goes on. When you are successful and get the contract, then starts the obstacle course. In order to get an advance on the payment, you need to spend money again. Once the work is finished, you wait until those who gave you the job tell you that it is well done. It’s very difficult to ensure that the people who sponsored the work are taken to the site to confirm that the works were executed in conformity with specified criteria. This also costs money.

**Bira (villager):** (*A bit agitated*) Money. Always money. Definitely, it is money that controls human relationships in the city.

**Laré (entrepreneur):** You could say so. The work is completed and the work has been OKed by the government agency. What is left is to obtain the remaining funds. I tell you that you will wear out your shoes if you forget to give money away.

**Bira (villager):** I don't know what to say. Your world is so different from ours!

**Laré (entrepreneur):** You understand that, in these conditions, we cannot deliver quality work to you. As we satisfy people’s greed, the quality of the work is sacrificed on the altar of mediocrity. And life goes on. As proof, I am here to repair the dam.

**Bira (villager):** (*With assurance*) Who is going to pay you this time? Don't forget that you are re-doing a job that you did the wrong way. In principle, you should not be paid. That's the truth, isn't it?

**Laré (entrepreneur):** You are really ignorant. The officials who granted me the contract know what they have done and I know it too. So, who is going to accuse whom? Before I came back here, we talked to each other and we understood each other. Everybody wins.

**Bira (villager):** (*Pointing finger*) Soyou are accomplices within a system that you are maintaining rather than fighting. I think that entrepreneurs should fight against this system for their own benefit and for ours too. Don't you have an association? You could win a big fight if you were united. You people from the city know that well.

**Laré (entrepreneur):** (*Very surprised*) You are scaring me! You are not as ignorant as I thought. Don't get me into trouble. In any case, I told you nothing. Everything I said was just a story.

**Bira (villager):** (*Mocking him*) Just a story? But an instructive one. I will talk about it at the next meeting of the farmers’ group. We may be useful to you some day. You never know.

**Laré (entrepreneur):** How can this story be of interest to the farmers group? Where do you get such an idea? I am telling you – it was just a story.

**Bira (villager):** A story that will leave no-one indifferent, nonetheless. I listened to you carefully and I know what you are talking about. I would like to share this story with the other farmers. We are the unintended victims of your system. This story needs to be told and be known by all.

**Laré (entrepreneur):** Are you serious?

**Bira (villager):** I did not beg you to tell me what I just heard. Right?

**Laré (entrepreneur):** (*Pause, speaking slowly*)I will talk to my colleagues about this. Maybe we can expose this corruption. I am glad that I did not waste my time with you. I admit that this was a good meeting.

**Presenter:** It is several days later. One evening, the town crier mounts his bike and rides through the village.

**Monda (town crier):** (*Loud and clear voice*)People of Zamana, men, women, elders and youth, I greet you. Through my voice and with the authorization of the chief, the farmers' group president invites you to a big meeting tomorrow morning at nine o’clock, under the big tree. The president would like to discuss with you what happening on the reclaimed land. Everyone is invited under the big tree, tomorrow morning at nine o’clock, to get information. I thank you in advance.

People of Zamana, men, women, elders and youth, I greet you. Through my voice ... (*voice repeats and fades*).

## Acknowledgements

Contributed by: Senior writer Adama G. Zongo, journalist, Jade Productions, Burkina Faso, a Farm Radio International strategic partner.

Reviewed by: Erik Nielsen, Manager Country Based Programmes, Water Integrity Network and Alexandra Malmqvist, Assistant Communications Coordinator, Water Integrity Network.

Thanks to: Christophe Tiemtore, provincial director of agriculture, hydraulics and halieutic resources, in Zoundwéogo, Burkina Faso

## Information sources

Interviews conducted on February 4, April 2 and April 6, 2010

* Youssouf A. Guindo, mediator at 2iE, Ouagadougou
* François Nikiema, programme officer, National network to fight corruption (REN-LAC)
* Issa Sorgho, NGO *Eau Vive*
* WIN-West Africa planning workshop held on April 6, 2010 in Ouagadougou

*Special thanks to the Water Integrity Network for supporting this script package on water integrity*

Program undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)