

BONUS TWO · AFRICANHOMEFRONT

The In-Law Boundary Protocol

Six Flashpoints.
A Rule For Each One.



One rule at a time. Thirty days each.

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AFRICANHOMEFRONT

BONUS TWO

The In-Law Boundary Protocol



HOW TO USE THIS

Chapter 8 of the main guide gave you the six flashpoints. This is the working version — every rule broken down, every script written out, every fallback covered, and a 30-day sequence for putting the first one in place.

Do not implement all six. That is the most common mistake and it is the one that fails. Read the whole document, then choose **one** flashpoint and run the 30-day sequence on it. Come back for the next one in two months.

The rule that governs everything here

A boundary **announced to her** is a confrontation. By evening the story will be *"she said I am not welcome in my own son's house,"* and your husband will be defending you against a charge you handed his family.

A boundary **the household operates** is simply how things are done. Nobody announces it, nobody debates it, and there is nothing for anyone to take anywhere.

Every rule in this document is designed to be operated, not declared.

The three principles

1. He states. You operate. Where a rule must be *said* to her, he says it. Where it must simply be *run*, you run it. A rule from a son is family business. The same rule from a wife is a wife with a problem. You did not design that. Use it.

2. Frame as household practice, never as a response to her. Not *"because of what happened last time."* Instead: *"in our house we do X."* And make it true — the rule should apply when she is not there.

3. Access before authority. Logistics before loyalty. Access rules require nobody to concede anything about respect, which makes them the cheapest wins available and the foundation for everything harder.



FLASHPOINT 1 — THE UNANNOUNCED ARRIVAL

THE RULE: Visits have dates, agreed before she travels.

What he says — to her, in advance, on an ordinary phone call

"Mama, when you are coming, tell me ahead so I can arrange things properly. I do not want you arriving and the house not ready for you."

Why this works: it is framed as *hospitality*, not restriction. He is not limiting her — he is honouring her properly. Thousands of Nigerian sons have said that exact sentence without a single argument resulting.

What you do

Nothing. This one is entirely his.

Your only job is to never mention it to her. Not once, not in passing, not to explain it. The moment it becomes visible as your idea, it becomes a grievance.

Fallbacks, in order

If he will not do it: ask for the smallest version.

"Can you just ask her to text you when she is setting off?"

Almost no man refuses that. It establishes the principle that arrivals are communicated, and you build from there.

If she arrives anyway: say nothing about it, ever. Receive her warmly. Then that evening, to him, once:

"She arrived today without telling us. I am not upset. Can you mention the dates thing again before next time?"

If it keeps happening: it is an authority problem, not an access problem. Go back to Chapter 7 and run the sequence again with this as your ask.



FLASHPOINT 2 — THE VISIT THAT DOES NOT END

THE RULE: Every visit has a return date, fixed before arrival.

What he says

"Mama, so I can arrange your transport — are you going back on the Sunday or the Monday?"

This is the single most effective sentence in this document. It is asked as a courtesy. It is entirely reasonable. And it establishes an end date without anyone ever discussing how long she should stay.

What you do

The day before, arrange the transport **visibly** — not as a hint, as service.

"Mama, the driver will come at seven tomorrow."

If the date slips

He calls it once, gently, framed entirely around logistics:

"Mama, I told the driver Sunday. Should I change it, or are we keeping Sunday?"

Most of the time she keeps Sunday. **Not leaving is easy; explicitly asking to stay longer is a different social act**, and most people will not perform it.

Fallbacks

If he will not ask: you handle the transport conversation yourself — and only about the car, never about duration.

"Mama, do you want me to arrange your transport for the weekend?"

It is a question about a vehicle. It is also a question about a date.

If she extends repeatedly: stop fighting the individual visit and change the frame. Have him propose a standing arrangement — *"Mama, why not come every December and every Easter, two weeks each time?"* A predictable invitation is more comfortable for her than what she has now, and it replaces open-ended access

with a shape.

If nothing works: protect your own routine inside the visit rather than the visit's length. Chapter 9's Visit Plan. Your work hours hold. The children's bedtime holds. You leave the room when you need to.



FLASHPOINT 3 — THE PHONE

THE RULE: There are protected hours. The phone is not answered during them — by anyone, for anyone.

What he says

Nothing. This one is never announced.

What you do

Agree two windows with him: **dinner**, and **the hour before sleep**. Phones on silent.

It applies to your mother. It applies to your friends. It applies to work.

That universality is what makes it survivable. It is not a rule about her. It is a rule about the household, and she happens to be inside a household that has one.

The part that makes it work

He calls her back afterwards. Every time. Without fail.

She is not being cut off. She is being called back at nine instead of seven. If he stops calling back, this becomes exactly what you promised it would not be, and she will notice within a fortnight.

Fallbacks

If he will not do two windows: take one. Dinner only. Thirty minutes.

Almost every man agrees to thirty minutes, and thirty minutes of uninterrupted household is worth more than you expect.

If he takes the call anyway: say nothing in the moment. Nothing at all — no face, no sigh, no look. Raise it later using Chapter 7's format. **A reaction during the call costs you the conversation you were going to have afterwards.**

If she escalates when unanswered — calling repeatedly, calling you instead, claiming an emergency: he calls back promptly and warmly every time, and the pattern settles within about three weeks. Escalation is a test of whether the rule is real.



FLASHPOINT 4 — MONEY

THE RULE: Money leaving the household is **discussed** first. Not permitted — discussed.

That word choice is the entire flashpoint. A Nigerian man asked to seek *permission* to support his mother will refuse, and he is right to hear it as an insult. The same man asked to *tell his wife before* is being asked for basic partnership, and most will agree.

What he says to her

Nothing. She never needs to know this rule exists.

What you say to him

"I am not asking to approve it. I am asking to know. When money goes out and I find out afterwards, I feel like I am not a partner in my own house."

What you do

Hold your side exactly. You tell him before money leaves for your family too.

This rule dies instantly if it runs one way — and it becomes very difficult to argue with if it runs both.

Fallbacks

If he will not: stop negotiating and build structure instead. A joint account for household essentials — rent, school fees, food — funded **first**, before anything else moves. Everything after that is discretionary.

That is not distrust. It is what Chapter 10 calls a floor, and every married woman should have one regardless of her mother-in-law.

If the amounts are unsustainable: shift the conversation from *her* to *arithmetic*. Sit down with the actual numbers. *"This is what comes in. This is what must go out. What is left is what we can send."* A man will argue about his mother for years and will rarely argue with a column of figures.

If she asks you directly for money:

"Let me talk to your son about it, Mama."

Always. Every time. **Never say yes and never say no** — both make you the decision-maker, and that is a position you do not want in this family.



FLASHPOINT 5 — THE CHILDREN

THE RULE: Parenting decisions are made by the parents. Grandmothers are honoured, consulted, and not obeyed.

This is the flashpoint where you hold firm even at cost. Access is negotiable. This is not — because inconsistency between adults does real damage to children, and because a child who learns that his mother's word can be overruled stops treating his mother's word as meaningful.

What he says — and it must be him

"Mama, we do it this way in our house. Help us keep them to it."

"Help us" is doing significant work there. It recruits rather than excludes, and it gives her a role that is not the role of decision-maker.

What you do

Never correct her in front of the children. Not once.

If she overrules you in front of them, you let it pass in the moment. It goes to him privately that evening.

Correcting her in front of the children costs far more than it gains: it hands her the story, and it teaches the children that the adults are in conflict — which is the thing you are trying to prevent.

Repair, afterwards, privately with the child

"Grandma has her own way of doing things and we respect her. In our house, the rule is still [X]."

That sentence protects both the rule and the relationship, and children accept it easily.

Fallbacks

If he will not state it: hold the rules yourself, consistently, without commentary. Children follow the adult who is consistent, not the adult who is loudest.

If she undermines you to the children directly — telling them their mother is too strict, giving them what you refused — that is not a claim, it is Chapter 4's C code. Name it to him specifically and factually:

"She told Chidi I am too strict, in front of him. That is going to make him harder to parent."

Frame it around the **child's behaviour**, not your feelings. It is a far more effective argument with most men.

If he still will not act: this is the flashpoint where a refusal matters most. Take it to Chapter 10 and take it seriously.



FLASHPOINT 6 — YOU: YOUR HOUSE, YOUR BODY, YOUR WORK

Cooking. Cleaning. Weight. Dress. Fertility. Your job.

THE RULE: Comment is survivable. Instruction is not.

She will have opinions about how you look and how you keep your house, and you cannot stop that. **What must not become normal is her opinion functioning as an instruction you are expected to follow.**

What you say

"Thank you, Mama."

That is it. Not agreement. Not defence. Not explanation.

"Thank you, Mama" — and then you carry on doing exactly what you were doing.

It is courteous, it is unarguable, and it gives her nothing to take to anyone. You have not been rude. You have simply not complied.

The variations

Situation	What you say
She instructs you	<i>"Thank you, Mama."</i>
She asks something you will not answer	<i>"Let me talk to your son about it."</i>
She criticises in front of others	<i>"You may be right, Mama."</i>
She presses for a decision	<i>"We will think about it, Mama."</i>

None of these is a yes. All of them end the exchange in front of the audience, which is what you actually need.

What he says

Only where it becomes public humiliation:

"Mama, please. Not in front of everybody."

That is a small sentence and many men will say it, because it is about **propriety** rather than about taking sides.

Fertility — the exception

This is the one where I would encourage you to be firmest, and it is fair to ask him to shut it down entirely.

"Mama, we are not discussing that."

No explanation. No timeline offered. No "we are trying."

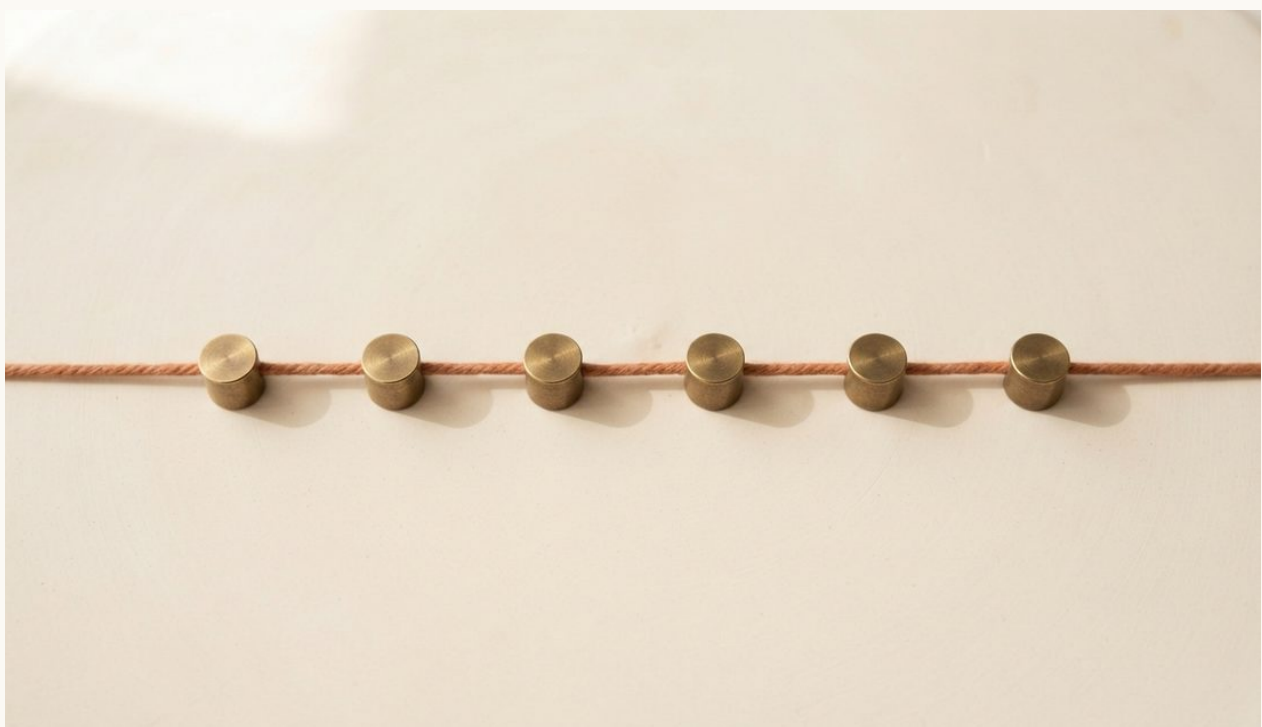
It is nobody's business, the pressure is genuinely harmful, and it is one of the few areas where most Nigerian husbands will act if asked directly — because most of them feel it too.

Fallbacks

If she persists after "thank you, Mama": repeat it. Identically. The second and third repetitions are more powerful than the first, because they demonstrate that the response is not going to change.

If it becomes public and repeated: leave the room. Not dramatically — go and check something. Chapter 9's exit.

If it is about your body specifically and it is constant: this is worth raising with him as a health matter rather than a respect matter. *"The comments about my weight are affecting me."* Most men respond better to that framing than to *"your mother insulted me."*



THE 30-DAY IMPLEMENTATION SEQUENCE

One flashpoint. Thirty days. Then stop and let it settle.

Before you start — choose

My flashpoint: _____

Why this one first: _____

Choosing well matters. Take the one that is highest frequency and lowest emotional charge — usually Flashpoint 1, 2 or 3. **Do not start with 5 or 6.** They are the hardest and a failure there poisons the rest.

Start date: _____ **Review date (day 30):** _____



WEEK 1 — AGREE IT

Objective: the two of you have a private agreement. Nothing happens externally.

Day 1–2. Have the conversation. Use Conversation Four from Bonus 1. One ask, and give him the exit.

What I asked for, exactly:

What he agreed to:

Day 3–7. Nothing. **Do not raise it again.** Do not remind him. Do not check.

This week's discipline is silence, and most women find it the hardest part of the whole sequence.



WEEK 2 — OPERATE IT

Objective: the rule runs. Nobody announces anything.

The phone goes on silent. The bedtime holds. The transport question gets asked. It simply happens.

Did it operate this week? ■ Yes ■ Partly ■ No

What happened:

If it operated: thank him. Once, plainly, no additions.

"You did the thing. Thank you."

If it did not: say nothing this week. Note it. Wait.

WEEK 3 — HOLD IT

Objective: survive the first test.

Something will test it this week or next — a call during dinner, an arrival, a date that slips. **That is not the rule failing. That is the rule being tested**, and rules are only real once they have been tested.

If he holds it: thank him again. Disproportionately.

If he does not: one sentence, no history, no accusation.

"The thing with the dates — it slipped this time. Can we get back to it next visit?"

What tested it:

What he did:

WEEK 4 — NORMALISE IT

Objective: it stops being a thing.

This is the week everyone forgets, and it is the one that makes the rule permanent.

Do not mention it. Do not praise it any more. Do not check on it. **A rule that is still being discussed in week four has not become a rule** — it is still a negotiation.

By now the transport is simply arranged. The phone is simply on silent. Nobody talks about it, and that silence is the finished product.

Is it happening without discussion? ■ Yes ■ Not yet

DAY 30 — REVIEW

Did the rule hold? ■ Fully ■ Mostly ■ Partly ■ No

How many times was it tested? _____

How many times did he hold it? _____

What made it hardest:

Reading it

Held fully or mostly → it is in place. **Now wait two months before starting the next flashpoint.** That gap is not laziness. A household that changes six things in six months has declared war; a household that changes one thing every two months has simply evolved.

Held partly → take the fragment that worked and build on it. Do not restart. Do not add anything.

Did not hold → go back to Bonus 1 and check the frame. Most failures are failures of framing, not of willingness. Was it presented as hospitality or as restriction? Was the ask executable on a specific Tuesday? Did you give him the exit?



THE ROLLING PLAN

Flashpoint 1 — started: _____ held: ■

Flashpoint 2 — started: _____ held: ■

Flashpoint 3 — started: _____ held: ■

Flashpoint 4 — started: _____ held: ■

Flashpoint 5 — started: _____ held: ■

Flashpoint 6 — started: _____ held: ■

Six flashpoints at one every two months is a year.

That will feel slow, and it is far faster than the years you have already spent. A year from now, with four of these in place, you are in a materially different household — and nobody will have had a single argument about it.



THE FIVE SENTENCES

Screenshot this page

HIM, before a visit:

"Mama, so I can arrange your transport — are you going back Sunday or Monday?"

HIM, about arrivals:

"Mama, tell me ahead so I can arrange things properly."

HIM, about the children:

"Mama, we do it this way in our house. Help us keep them to it."

YOU, to almost anything:

"Thank you, Mama."

YOU, when asked to decide something:

"Let me talk to your son about it."

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This workbook accompanies **My Mother-In-Law Is Destroying My Marriage** — the main guide. Every tool here expands one you have already used there.

This document provides general information. It is not medical, psychological or legal advice.