

Who When Wow, Season 2, Episode 2

A Missing Masterpiece

Carly. Today's super secret podcast episode is all about dogs. Well, not entirely, but there are a lot of them in this episode. So cat people, be warned. Today, I traveled back in time to the 1950s. I created a disguise and I solved a mystery, kind of. And it all started with man's best friend. I'm Carly Q, and this is Who, When, Wow! Mystery Edition.

(Theme Song)

Carly. It was a regular old normal day at the Bureau of Universal Time Travel Historical Exploration Division, also known as BUTTHEAD. Or so I thought. It only took me a second to remember that today was Take Your Dog to Work Day. And the Bureau went all in.

(Soundbite of dogs and busy office)

Carly. Wow, so many dogs. There were dogs everywhere. They even made an entire canine resources department. Suddenly, I felt weird about not having one.

(Sound of Carly going to basement)

Carly. Whew, it's busy up there. At least down here, I can have some peace.

Lewis. Hey Carly Q.

Carly. Lewis, you scared me. What are you doing down here?

Lewis. (to a dog) It's okay buddy, Did the mean old lady scare you?

Carly. Lewis is one of my two, you can't see this, but air quotes, friends here at Butthead. And he's really more of a, air quotes again, frenemy in a way. Seems pretty obvious to me that we do not get along but some times he comes down and just hangs out by my desk for some reason.

Lewis. I was just down here giving Mr Snarkypants some quiet time, and maybe a chance to do his business in private. There's so many other dogs up there he gets a little anxious...

Carly. Wait. Do you mean do his business? Or "do his business"? Because I gotta work down here and --

Lewis. (to his dog) You wanna say hi to the lady with the wild hair, Snarky? Do you? Huh?

Carly. Wow, he's very small. What breed is he?

Lewis. He's a pomerahuaadoodle. Carly, this is Mister Snarkypants. You can call him... Mister Snarkypants. Snarky - you wanna say hi to Carly?

(Sound bite of Dog growling)

Lewis. I think that's a no. Where's your dog, Carly?

Carly. Uhhhh

Lewis. You *do* have a dog, right?

Carly. (in background) Uhhhhhh of course I do. She's probably just exploring. You know how dogs are... Uhm.. here girl! Come here... girl...

Carly. V/O. I have no idea why I suddenly cared about this so much, but I did NOT want Lewis to have something I didn't, so I reached out to my OTHER office friend, Nibbles. And if you've been listening, you know she's a rat. She was napping in her usual spot behind the fake plant by my desk. I scooped her up and quickly wrapped her in the extra hoodie I had on my chair.

Carly. Lewis, Mister Snarkypants, say hello to... Nibbles!

Lewis. Ewww. What kind of breed is THAT?

Carly. Oh, she's a -- Yorkschnauzerussell terrierdoodle. Very rare and unique.

Lewis. Yah. I'm not sure that's a legit pedigree for a dog. In fact, I'm not sure that's a DOG. Or a pet of any kind. That looks like a...

Carly. Hey excuse me Nibbles is my friend!

Lewis. Hmmm... well, I may have to talk to Canine Resources about this. We'll see what they say...Anyhoo, thanks for letting us have some quiet time down here. Sorry about the puddles. Paper towels are over there by the restrooms... Say bye Mr Snarkypants!

(Soundbite of dog growling)

Lewis. Bye Carly Q...

(Soundbite of rat squeaking)

Carly. Tell me about it. Talking to Lewis is like putting shaving cream on your pie instead of whipped cream.

(Soundbite of rat squeaking)

Carly. Yeah, I know! But I only did it once. And I'm sorry about that Nibbles. Thanks for being my substitute pet.

(Soundbite of rat squeaking)

Carly. Okay, gotta get back to work. Those files won't categorize themselves. When I finally sat down to work, there were a few files waiting for me to catalogue. That's basically all I do here at the Bureau - file away random events in History. I'm an excellent detective, but I never get to actually investigate anything unless...

(Sound bite of Thumb drive sliding down)

Carly. Oh here comes a new one.

Audio File. Event. New York, May 29th 1953 (BLEEEEEEP>> Masterpiece (BLEEEEEEEP>> Missing.

Carly. Yess! Another time-sealed event! Technically, I'm not supposed to do anything with these files, but I can't resist a mystery. What kind of a detective would I be if I didn't explore? I immediately pulled out my company issued hand-held device.. H-dad.

H-dad. Back on the case!

Carly. H-dad gimme everything you've got on masterpieces in New York in 1953.

H-dad. Analyzing, Analyzing... New York 1953! The Chrysler family sold the Chrysler building for 18 million dollars. Bing Crosby is a top movie star. And Thom McCann Wing-tips are the best-selling shoes!

Carly. H-dad, refine search: New York, 1953 MASTERPIECE.

H-dad. Analyzing!... Analyzing. Analyzing. Oh look! Analyzing... Analyzing..

Carly. I'm thinking maybe a stolen painting or something? Or maybe a culinary masterpiece. Like a perfect dessert or a really unique jell-o mold...

H-dad. Analyzing!... Analyzing... Analyzing.

Carly.

Ugh! This is not gonna get me anywhere. Nibbles, whaddaya think? Wanna see if Odie can help? I really need to get H-dad to IT for a tune up.

(Soundbite of Rat squeak. Carly shoves H-dad in her pocket/backpack with muffles the "analyzing")

Carly. Odessa is our resident elevator operator. She's been working here forever, and she operates the time portal -- which is basically just a basement service elevator that can take you to any point in history.

Carly. Hello Miss Odessa! How are you today?

Odie. Greetings again, basement companion. Why so formal?

Carly. Because today is a special day!

Odie. I know. It's take your dog to work day. I'm more of a cat person. That is a very ugly dog.

Carly. Odie, this is Nibbles! She's a basement rat. You've seen her before.

Odie. Yes. But it's probably better if I pretend to think she's a dog.

Carly. Fair point. Anyway, I got this... you know... time-sealed file, and I was wondering if maybe we could --

Odie. (sighs) Of course you do. OK. But this is definitely the last time. Or may the second to last. Could be third if you bring me more biko. Those sweet rice cakes would just really hit the spot right about now...

Carly. Okay, noted. We need to go to New York City. Late May, 1953... There's a missing masterpiece we need to find!

Odie. (chuckling) Heh, heh... Yes, there is!

Carly. You know this mystery?

Odie. A little.

Carly. So what kind of a masterpiece are we talking about here?

Odie. You'll see... There's an old saying that goes "That which is priceless has no cost".

(Sound bite of wind chime)

Odie. You would do well to remember that.

Carly. That doesn't answer my question, Odie!

Odie. And of course remember the Time Traveling rules: NO interfering. You may observe but not meddle. You cannot change anything in the past. And no chewing gum of any kind. Even sugar-free.

Carly. Uh. OK. That's new. Got it.

Odie. A card key reader will remain where the time travel elevator deposits you, and you must return prior to the end of your break period. Any questions?

Carly. Nope. No meddling. No changing. No gum. No sugar. Got it. I'm ready to go.

Odie. Good luck basement companion!

(Soundbite ding and helicopter noises)

Carly. New York here I comeeee.

(Sound bite elevator ding and bustling crowds)

Carly. Whoa New York City, concrete jungle where dreams are made of. It was New York City, alright... but not the way I knew it. This was 1953, and everything was different. The cars were old-timey, the people were dressed all fancy, and there were "lost dog" fliers posted on walls and telephone poles everywhere.

Nibbles. Ahhh, the city!

Carly. Ah! Nibbles! You startled me!

Carly. V/O. I always forget that Nibbles can talk when we time travel. It's a weird side effect. I don't understand the logic of this science. Science magic

Nibbles. A rat in her natural habitat! This is more like it! Better than being somebody's pet chihuahua-ranian or whatever.

Carly. Oh I don't know. I bet Lewis's dog has a VERY comfortable life

Nibbles. Hey, freedom is freedom. I like making my own choices.

Carly. Fair enough. And I'm glad you're here, Nibbles. We have a Who When Wow mystery to solve. We know the "when". It's 1953 New York..

Nibbles. Yes, it is. The city is almost clean...almost...

Carly. We know the "wow" is a missing masterpiece, but we don't know the who.

Nibbles. Or the what. It could be a what.

Carly. Yeah, but "What When Wow" doesn't sound as good.

Betty. Lost dog! Very valuable! Reward offered for ANY information!

Carly. Hang on, What's that?

Betty. Lost dog! We lost Masterpiece! The most valuable dog in the world! He's missing!

Carly...and his name is "Masterpiece"?..

Betty. Whaddaya been livin under a rock? Yeah, his name is Masterpiece! He's only the most famous poodle on the planet!

Nibbles. Great. More dogs.

Betty. Say, that's a cute little... dog- thing you got there in your bag. You're obviously a friend to animals. You think you could help?

Carly. I could not believe that my missing masterpiece was just another lost dog. I traveled back 7 decades for this? ... But still. I could see how upset this lady was. She obviously needed help finding her poodle. In fact, she kinda looked like a poodle. Puffy hair, skinny legs and all...

Carly. Of course I can help. That's what I'm here for.

Betty. Oh! You must be that private eye they said they were gonna hire to help with the investigation!

Carly. (brief pause) Yes. Yes I am....

Betty. Great. I'm Betty. I'm the dog's beautician.

Carly. This dog has his own beautician??

Betty. This is not any normal dog, honey. This is MASTERPIECE. He's the champion of champion show dogs. He's won all the top dog shows, been in fashion shows - He was even in Vogue Magazine!

Carly. OK, so he's a big deal.

Betty. He's the top dog, literally. His owner is Count Alexis Pulaski a rich Russian fella who owns the dog grooming place for poodles across the street.

Carly. You mean the one with the sign that says, "Poodles Incorporated"?

Betty. That's the one.

Nibbles. (sarcastically) There's that keen detective's eye!

Betty. You know, I could give your little friend here a really nice make-over while we're there... She looks a little "ratty"...

Carly. Thank you, but we're fine. She's her own kind of masterpiece, trust me. Come on Nibbles!

(Soundbite of crossing busy street)

Nibbles. This place is very fancy.

Carly. Oh suddenly being someone's pet doesn't seem so bad now?

Nibbles. As far as pet habitats go these are the nicest I've seen. But it's still just a fancy cage. Even though none of the dogs are on leashes.

Carly. Poodles Incorporated was not like any dog kennel I'd seen before. There were dogs here, sure. Poodles, Lots of em... But they were all laying around on pillows, chewing dog toys and lounging about.

Shopkeeper. May I help you?

Carly. Hi, yes. I'm Carly Quinn. I'm investigating the Masterpiece disappearance, I was wondering if --

Pulaski. Masterpiece? Did someone say Masterpiece?? Waaaaahhhhhh

Shopkeeper. Sorry. That's Count Pulaksi, the dog's owner. He's lying down in the back room. He's been inconsolable since the dog vanished.

Pulaski. Did someone say "Dog vanished"?? Waaaaahhhh!

Shopkeeper. Eh, we have to be very careful what we say, obviously... Maybe we could step outside?

Nibbles. Would you get a load of all of these ribbons and trophies?

Carly. It was true. The walls and shelves were covered with ribbons and trophies, but the pictures were what caught my eye. This little grey poodle was a big deal! He posed with major movie stars. He was in advertisements. He was even on a magazine cover under the headline "Most Valuable Dog in the World"

Shopkeeper. Sorry about that. It's been a little hectic around here, as you can see.

Carly. Is Mister er... Count Pulaski always this emotional?

Shopkeeper. No, not really. He's usually pretty professional with the dogs, but Masterpiece was different. He actually dedicated his life to that dog. He got him his own bodyguard. His own beautician!

Carly. Yeah, we met earlier actually.

Shopkeeper. He hired a lion trainer to teach the dog tricks! He even turned down an offer from the Pakistani Ambassador who was willing to pay 25,000 big ones to buy the dog as a gift for his wife!

Carly. Wow!

H-dad. (muffled in backpack) In today's money that would be nearly quarter of a million dollars.

Shopkeeper. Say what now?

Carly. Er, I said... He probably wouldn't sell him for a million dollars!

Shopkeeper. You got that right, sister.

Carly. Would you mind if we, I mean I looked around a little?

Shopkeeper. Nah. Course not. Just don't mess with the dogs. I gotta go check on the boss, but I'll be inside in the back if you need me.

(Soundbite of shopkeeper walking off)

Carly. Hey Nibbles come out of the backpack for a sec, we need to re-cap: This dog is living the good life, right?

Nibbles. You can say that again. His own beautician, bodyguard, good food, cushions to chew on. A warm place to make his nest... what else does he need?

Carly. He's the most valuable dog in the world. So valuable that his owner wouldn't part with him for a quarter of a million dollars in today's money.

Nibbles. That would buy a lot of cushions...

Carly. I don't know Nibbles. Something doesn't add up here. I smell a rat.

Nibbles. Sorry. Sometimes I get gassy when I'm nervous.

Carly. No. That's just an expression it means something doesn't seem right. Lets go back in.

Nibbles. Good idea. Also, you might not wanna open the backpack for a while...

Shopkeeper. So... any theories, detective?

Carly. Not as many as I'd like... So is it normal to have dogs just lying around like this? No leashes or crates or anything?

Shopkeeper. Oh, that's not necessary. These are VERY sophisticated animals! Our dogs are too well-trained for leashes... And they love it here. Look! Precious here is making herself a pupaccino!

(Soundbite of coffee machine)

Carly. See Nibbles? Wouldn't you like to be able to have a pupaccino once in a while?

Nibbles. Meh. I'm more of a Rat-spresso girl, myself.

Carly. Touche.

Shopkeeper. Just two weeks ago, we were all here - just like this. It was the morning after the big Easter fashion show, and Masterpiece was relaxing in his red lounge. Count Pulaski had an errand to run, and I went downstairs for a bit to check on the inventory. Shortly after 1pm, the count returned and called for Masterpiece... but the dog didn't respond. I knew something was wrong right then, but we kept calling and calling.. Eventually, we had to accept the fact that Masterpiece was GONE.

Carly. And what did you do then?

Shopkeeper. We called the police. The police called more police, who also called police.

Carly. Wait... So how many police departments were involved?

Shopkeeper. 13 different states! Plus, we had dozens and dozens of volunteers! The Count has offered a reward -- even a free poodle, no questions asked! But so far, no one has come forward.

Carly. Hmmmmmm...

Shopkeeper. I smell a rat.

Carly. Yeah, well the lack of evidence does kind of lean towards foul play..

Shopkeeper. No. I actually smell a rat. I have a very keen sense of smell.

Carly. Maybe you're just smelling the pupaccinos?

Shopkeeper. Oh no I wouldn't —

Pulaski. Did someone say Pupaccino??! Waaaahhhhh!!

Shopkeeper. Ugh. Masterpiece loved pupaccinos... excuse me...Yes, yes. We know. It's OK... Can I make you a cup of tea?

Carly. I don't get it, Nibbles.

Nibbles. Me neither. Smell a rat or "smell a rat"? Sometimes I wish I never learned how to talk...

Carly. No. I'm talking about this mystery. If somebody dognapped Masterpiece, they would have come for the reward by now, right? Or demanded ransom?

Nibbles. True. There's gotta be a reason why you'd go to the trouble of stealing a dog like this. And money is usually a pretty good reason.

(Sound bite of door opening)

Betty. Carly, I'm glad you're still here.

Carly. Oh, hi Betty.

Betty. There's something you should know Carly. I just heard a rumor that one eye witness told the police that they saw a mysterious woman in a red coat leaving here that day. With a small grey poodle following her. And the dog was NOT on a leash...

Carly. There are a lot of grey poodles in here...

Betty. Yeah, but Masterpiece wasn't kept on a leash. Ever. He was so well- trained, no one thought he needed one!

Nibbles. Oooh! I got chills!

Betty. Your dog --er -- pet here looks a little chilly in your handbag. Can I get you a pupacino?

Pulaski. Pupacino??! Waaaahhhhh!!

Carly. A mysterious lady in red! The mystery gets more mysterious.

Betty. It's a little weird that Masterpiece would just follow a stranger out the door though. He's so happy here, ya know?

Carly. He's never run off before, right?

Betty. No! Never!... Well, once.

Carly. He ran away once?

Betty. Actually twice.

Carly. Twice?!

Betty. Well, the first time he was only nine months old. He ran into the woods and spent a few days in the New Jersey countryside before wandering back home.

Nibbles. Jersey can be lovely this time of year!

Betty. Sorry, what?

Carly. Nothing. What about the other time Masterpiece ran away?

Betty. Oh, that was just a little thing. A day-trip really. He snuck out the door and wandered around the city before strolling into a store on Park Avenue.

Nibbles. What did I tell you? The freedom of the big city baby!

Betty. Ok, that time I definitely heard somebody. Is there something in your bag that ---

Carly. You know, actually I think I will have that (loudly) PUP-A-CINO.

Pulaski. Pupacino??! Waaaahhhhh!!

Shopkeeper. Oh, COME ON!! We just settled down back here!!

Betty. Sure, I'll be right back!

Carly. Come on Nibbles, let's go. We gotta get back to the Time Elevator anyway...

(Sound bite of NYC noise, Carly and Nibbles running off)

Nibbles. This is what I'm saying. No matter how comfortable your cage is, it's still a cage. Even the most loyal pup knows that.

Carly. So you think Masterpiece just ran away?

Nibbles. He did it twice before. Third time's the charm.

Carly. But no one ever found him, and the whole city was looking! Besides, we can't ignore the lady in red.

Nibbles. The lady who kidnapped the dog, but never collected the reward or asked for any ransom? Why do that?

Carly. I don't know... This is why it's a mystery.

Nibbles. Well, inspector Q. Here we are back at the Time Elevator. I think we have - what - 90 seconds left on your lunch break?

Carly. Ugh another granola bar at the desk again for lunch..It's actually never going to get old, I rather be doing this for lunch, it's fine.

(Soundbite card key beep, elevator taking off)

Odie. Greetings basement companion and animal companion. How were the poodles of New York?

Carly. Hmm Confusing. It seems like we have two options: Either Masterpiece was dog-napped by someone who didn't want money or anything (they just wanted to keep him as their pet), OR he just ran away on his own. I don't think we'll ever know what happened.

Odie. Do you know what DID NOT happen?

Carly. Well, Masterpiece did NOT stay in his very posh and comfortable living space.... And if someone kidnapped him, they did NOT do it for money or fame.

Odie. What does that tell you?

Carly. Well, I guess this shows that there are some things that are more important or valuable than being rich or comfortable. Like freedom or friendship...OH WAIT! I remember now "That which is priceless has no cost"

(Soundbite wind chime)

Odie. Now you see?

Carly. I ...think so?

Odie. Because I don't ring these chimes for my health you know?

Carly. Of course not. I get it. Thank you Odie.

Odie. Have a good rest of your day, basement companion.

Carly. And just like that, it was back to Bring Your Dog to Work Day. Although now, I didn't mind it so much. Down you go Nibbles. Nibbles snuck back to her favorite spot and I settled back in to my work.

Carly in background. Thanks again for coming with. You're a good friend.

Carly. (Cont'd) I could still hear the occasional bark or paw-steps of the dogs in the upstairs office, and it reminded me of how much Masterpiece meant to his people. I'm bummed we never found out what happened to him, but maybe this episode will help some folks see the really important things in life more clearly --

Carly in background. You want one of these? But these are dog treats. Okay all right, here you go.

(Soundbite of rat squeak)

Carly. (Cont'd) like love and friendship and good company on big adventures... I know this is a secret podcast and everything, but maybe this is one idea we should share with the world, huh? Until next time, this is Carly Q signing off! And remember, you never heard this!