

Who When Wow, Season 2, Episode 21

The Mysterious Fires of Sicily

Carly. People of the Universe, Pop in your headphones if there's anyone close by so they don't hear all our juicy secrets. Today's mystery is HOT... *literally*! But it's not just about fire; it's about determination, fighting for answers -- and mysterious heatwaves. I'm Carly Q and this is Who, When ,Wow, Mystery Edition!

(THEME SONG)

(Soundbite of office, phones ringing.)

Carly in the background. Good morning, Greg!

Carly. As you know, I work at BUTTHED as a Junior Temporal Analyst during business hours.

Carly in the background. The casserole you brought for the pot luck was scrumptious with a capital umptious!

Carly. But I spend my lunch breaks doing my *real* work.

Carly in the background. Can you email me the recipe?

Carly. Investigating history's mysteries to bring my findings to you through this super important podcast.

(Soundbite of Carly running down the basement steps.)

Carly. We just had a long holiday weekend so I was refreshed and ready to get back to work. But then,

Lewis. Heeyyyy, Carly Q!

Carly in the background. Here we go again.

Carly. You-know-who came down to the basement to visit.

Carly in the background. What's happening, Lewis?

Lewis. I have a project for you.

Carly. (interested) Ooh Does this project involve pie?

Lewis. No.

Carly. Balloon animals? I am great at making balloon animals!

Lewis. Uhm. Weird flex, but no... BUTTHED wants us all to move our file cabinets.

Carly. Do what, now?

Lewis. The company has been trying to cut down on using paper -- saving the planet, and all that -- and there's no need for these file cabinets full of paper anymore.

Carly. It's nice to work for such an Earth-friendly company.

Lewis. Right... So anyway, you need to move that big gray monstrosity by the end of the day.

(Soundbite of Carly knocking on the file cabinet like a door.)

Carly. But this thing is HUGE!

Lewis. And probably really heavy too.

Carly. Wait, I'm supposed to get this up all of those stairs by myself?

Lewis. Yes.

Carly. The movers can't come down and help me?

Lewis. They're actually afraid of stairs.

Carly. What kind of movers are afraid of stairs??

Lewis. The kind with an agency contract and a lot of very nearsighted employees.

Carly. Oh. Well can YOU help me, Lewis?

Lewis. Me? (laughs) You heard the part where it's big and heavy, right?

Carly. Yeah, yeah I did that's why I need your help

Lewis. (laughs) Don't be silly Carly Q, I mean LOOK at these stairs! Yeesh! Well, good luck

(Soundbite of Lewis walking up the stairs.)

Carly. Oh, mumble for us!

(Soundbite of a thumb drive comes down the vacuum tube.)

Carly. I had no idea how I was supposed to get that filing cabinet up seventeen steps, but I couldn't stress over it. A time sealed file just arrived!

Carly in the background. Phew... saved by the bell! Time sealed file! Let's see what it is!

Audio File. TIME SEALED EVENT! Event: (BLEEP) Sicily, Italy (BLEEEP) January, 2004 (BLEEEEEEP) multiple fires.

Carly in the background. Italy! The birthplace of the legendary Pasta Pie. Or, as some people call it... lasagna!

Carly. I grabbed my H-dad device.

H-dad. Powering up!

(Soundbite of Carly typing on a keyboard.)

Carly. And entered my clues.

Carly in the background. Sicily, Italy. January, 2004. And, multiple fires.

H-dad. Analyzing.

P.A. Voice. Attention Butthead employees. What is a printer's least favorite kind of sandwich? Paper jam! This is your friendly reminder that all file cabinets must be removed from the office today. You're welcome for helping you save the planet.

Carly. Gosh Isn't there another way to save the planet?

H-dad. Analysis complete! It is with 95.643% accuracy that the time-sealed event is the Unexplained Fires of Sicily, Italy in 2003 and 2004.

Carly. BOTH 2003 and 2004?

H-dad. The first instance happened in December of 2003 and the remainder were in 2004.

(Soundbite of the lunch bell rings.)

P.A. Voice. Oh, and to give you extra time for file cabinet removal, we're starting lunch now!

Carly. Now? But I just got here! Alright, fine! An early morning trip to the time travel elevator was in my future. Nibbles you there? You feel like taking a trip to Italy? Get it? Hop in the backpack.

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

Carly. I don't care that it's morning. We're gonna find some pasta and maybe some pizza and maybe some chicken parm and maybe some lasagna and maybe some cacio e pepe and oh maybe some arantini and maybe some tiramisu and maybe come avocado.

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

(Soundbite of ding of an elevator then elevator music.)

Carly. Odie! My favorite person who spends all day in an elevator!

Odie. True. This job has its ups and downs.

Carly. I was, wait. Did you just make a joke?

Odie. What joke?

Carly. (pause) Nevermind.

Odie. Obviously you need to borrow the Time Elevator again. Where-slash-when are you headed today?

Carly. Sicily, Italy! Apparently there were some fires there in 2003 and 2004 that no one can explain.

Odie. I was a firefighter once.

Carly. You were?

Odie. I was. I could carry the ladder and the fire hose at the same time.

Carly. You are so strong! Question, will you help me carry my file cabinet up the stairs?

Odie. That was a long time ago. I only carry files now. No cabinets.

Carly. But I don't know how I'm supposed to get that big old thing up all those stairs, Odie!

Odie. Well, sometimes the questions are complicated, but the answers are simple.

(Soundbite of wind chimes.)

Carly. I am going to record that sound one of these days since nobody else seems to hear it.

Odie. What sound?

Carly. Exactly!

Odie. Okay, time to go. You know the rules by now, but I'll repeat them just in case. When you go to the past, you may observe and ask questions, but do not meddle. Understand?

Carly. Yeah, Yeah, Yeah.

Odie. When you arrive back in time, a card reader will remain where you came in. Use your keycard and the elevator will reappear. You can also use it to fast forward to other time periods on the file. But you **MUST** be back here before the end of your lunch break. Which is very early today no?

Carly. Yes!

Odie. And since you're going to Italy, I'll activate the interpreter protocol. You'll be able to speak to and understand everyone there. Ready?

Carly. Ready!

(Soundbite of elevator doors close and travel noises.)

Carly. Lasagna, here I coommeee!

(Soundbite of thud as elevator lands.)

Carly. So, this is Sicily, Italy! (inhales deeply) Can you smell the food, Nibbles?

Nibbles. Oh, yes! Also, the sea (sniffs) and freshly ground coffee (sniffs) and the "new car smell" of a sparkling new vespa scooter!

Carly. Wow. Rats really DO have a strong sense of smell.

Nibbles. Yep! But mostly for food. Are we sure we want to solve this mystery instead of just going on a tasting tour?

Carly. Oh, Nibbles. You're hilarious!

Nibbles. That wasn't a joke...

Carly. Everything here is so colorful, and the weather is so lovely. There are an awful lot of people walking around even though it's winter...

Village Mayor. Yes, this way for those escaping the fires. Your hotel is right here!

Nibbles. Looks like we're in the right place.

Carly. They must've evacuated the village where the unexplained fires happened. Oh heads up someone's coming

Nibbles. I'll be in the backpack if you need me ...or if there are snacks.

Village Mayor. 'Scuzi! Senora? Could you be the investigator from the National Research Council sent about the fires in our village?

Carly. Uhh... yes! I... could be! Sure!

Village Mayor. (exhausted) I'm the mayor of Canneto di Caronia and it's been a looong week. Several days ago, we got a series of very puzzling electrical bursts that caused nine houses to catch fire.

Carly. Nine?! That's so many!

Village Mayor. Yes! No one was harmed, thank goodness.

(Soundbite of a resident approaches.)

Resident #1. My Television exploded. And it was not even on at the time.

Carly. That's unbelievable!

Village Mayor. Indeed. Other people said that air conditioning units and other electronics burst into flames as well. None of those were plugged in either!.

Carly. Hmm... so, I guess it didn't happen because of an electrical power surge.

Village Mayor. People are getting nervous. Some are saying it was UFOs.

Carly. (buzzing with excitement) Wait, UFO's? ...Aliens?

Village Mayor. I happen to think those people have watched one too many movies. That's why I called your office. So maybe we could get a scientific approach?

Carly. Right. Yes, science. Of course. heh. I think the next step should be to check out your village and see what I can discover. With science.

Village Mayor. Good idea! Staying in a hotel is nice, but we're all very anxious to get back to our homes in Canneto di Caronia.

Carly. Of course you are!

(Soundbite of Carly begins walking away.)

Village Mayor. Grazie! Ciao!

Carly. Ciao!

(Soundbite of the backpack opens and Nibbles pops out.)

Nibbles. Did someone say chow?

Carly. No. They said Ciao! Not "Chow"... But they also mentioned Aliens, Nibbles! This could be IT!

Nibbles. Aaaand I also heard them say something about SCIENCE, remember? And FACTS?

Carly. Of course! Absolutely! Following facts is what we do! Now we just take the elevator back to the town of Canneto di Caronia.

(Soundbiet of Carly and Nibbles scurry into the elevator. Then the elevator doors close. Then whistling wind.)

Nibbles. Whoa, it's like a ghost town in here.

Carly. Right ghosts can also be behind this. Good theory, Nibbs!

Nibbles. No! I just mean there's no more people here so it feels very empty. Maybe we should investigate one of the houses that caught fire. There might be some clues we're looking for there. Also food.

Carly. Good plan, Nibs!

(Soundbite of Carly and Nibbles walking.)

Carly. This might be my big chance to finally prove the existence of aliens!

Nibbles. Why would an alien start a fire?

Carly. I'd bet my favorite scrunchie that these aliens are made out of electricity.

Nibbles. The blue scrunchie?

Carly. No, the yellow one. Blue was my favorite last week. But ok I'm thinking that if the aliens don't know how much power they have, they could've touched things and accidentally blew them up!

Nibbles. Oh, there's one of the houses!

Carly. Hmmm. This house looks perfectly normal except for a small section that looks a little black and sooty. Let's go inside! Nibbles, can you climb through that window and unlock the --

(Soundbite of door opening clicking.)

Carly. Door? Wow. You're good.

Nibbles. Thank you. Now to find some cheese! errr-- uh Clues!

(Soundbite of Carly's feet crunch on plastic and glass remnants on the floor.)

Carly. Watch out for all the plastic and glass on the floor. What do you think it was?

Nibbles. I bet this is the house where the television exploded.

Carly. Why do you say that?

Nibbles. Cause I think this square plastic lump is what's left of a TV.

Carly. Woah. OK, so what is the evidence telling us?

Nibbles. (from behind TV) From back here, it looks like the television was plugged in when it exploded and probably started the fire.

Carly. How do you know that?

Nibbles. My sister lives in an alley behind Engine Company 166 in Staten Island...

Carly. But the Mayor said there were other electronics that weren't plugged in when they caught fire. How do you explain that?

Nibbles. Hmm...

Telecom. Extraterrestrials.

Carly. Shhh! Did you hear that?

Nibbles. Looks like we're not the only ones investigating.. There's a telecom lady and a guy in a labcoat walking around outside. Did they say,

Carly. EXTRATERRESTRIALS! They must've found proof! Let's go!

Nibbles. Where?

Carly. We've got to follow them and find out what else they know. Andiamo, Nibbs!

Nibbles. What does that mean?

Carly. It means, let's go!

(Soundbite of Carly rushing out of the house with Nibbles.)

Nibbles. Hey How come you know Italian all of a sudden?

Carly. Don't worry about it

(Soundbite of investigators walking ahead on the pavement.)

Carly. (whispers) Let's hide in those bushes, so we can hear what they say.

(Soundbite of Carly and Nibbles' footsteps on the grass and fallen leaves.)

Carly. (grunting) I can't fit under the bushes.

Nibbles. No, no! You hide behind the bush! I go under. Yes, like that! Ow! Watch the tail!

(Soundbite of bushes rustle.)

Carly. I can't hear what they're saying.

Telecom Expert. You can come out of the bushes now.

Nibbles. I think they said we can come out of the bushes now.

Carly. Thanks. I got that part.

Scientist. Why are you spying on us?

Carly. We were just trying to find out what you know about the fires. I mean how did they start without an explanation?

Scientist. We are. And there's always an explanation.

Carly. Yes, exactly! So, what do you think?

Scientist. My theory is that the fires were caused by a geomagnetic abnormality.

Telecom Expert. And my theory is that the fires were caused by an extraterrestrial atmospheric oddity.

Scientist. So, we're closing the case with a suggestion that an abnormal presence in the electrical field caused it.

Carly. Wait. So you're saying that it could have been something that happens naturally OR it could be something like aliens?

Scientist. Basically, yes. We know the fires were the result of a surge in the electrical field, but we can't say for sure what caused it.

Nibbles. Well that's unhelpful! These people are supposed to be experts! You think they would try a little harder to find out what actually happened here!

Scientist. Did your mouse just ... say something to me?

Carly. Of course not! First of all, she's a rat, not a mouse. And she was talking to ME.

Telecom Expert. How European of you.

Carly. Uh... I don't know what that means, but what we're getting at here is that there is always an answer. Maybe if we work together, we can find it.

Telecom Expert. We DID work together.

Scientist. And we found a way to compromise.

Carly. But we need an explanation, right?

Scientist. What we need is a panini and maybe some gelato!

Telecom Expert. Si! It's almost time for lunch.

Carly. Lunch!? Oh no!

H-dad. Five minutes until your lunch break is finished.

Carly. We've gotta go, but -- uh -- keep thinking guys! The answers are always there!

Scientist. Ciao!

Nibbles. Why does everyone keep talking about chow? Me hungry

Carly. I know Nibbles you're right

Nibbles. I could go for some chow mein right nowwww.

(Soundbite of Carly and Nibbles running to elevator. Elevator doors close then travel noises the ding.)

Carly. I can't believe we were in Italy and didn't eat anything.

Odie. Welcome back, basement companion! Did you find out what started all those fires?

Carly. Not really! The investigators looked at all the evidence and decided that it could have been anything from a natural occurrence in nature to aliens.

Odie. That sounds frustrating.

Carly. Very!

Odie. But also... it might help you with your file cabinet problem.

Carly. Oh, really?

Odie. Well, you feel the investigators weren't trying hard enough to find the right answer.

Carly. And I'm doing the same thing. (groans in realization) There is always an answer and I just need to find it.

Odie. Exactly! Sometimes the questions are complicated, but the answers are simple. Especially if you break the problem down.

(Soundbite of wind chimes.)

Carly. That's right!

Odie. Best of luck with your file cabinets.

(Soundbite of Odie disappears behind the elevator door with a ding.)

Carly. Thanks Odie!

Carly in background. She's gone. She's gone.

Carly. Alright break the problem down? That's it! I've got it!

(Soundbite of file cabinet drawers opening.)

Carly. There was no way I'd be able to carry the file cabinet upstairs with everything in it. That's it! I've got it!

(Soundbite of boxes dropped onto the floor. Paper rustling.)

Carly. So my first step was to empty out the papers and put them into boxes light enough for me to carry.

(Soundbite of file cabinet drawers being separated from the frame.)

Carly. And then I removed all of the drawers.

Carly in the background. Done!

(Soundbite of footsteps approaching.)

Lewis. Oh CARLY Q

Carly. I'm coming up Lewis.

Lewis. And I was headed back down to see how you're doing. But it looks like you've got everything handled

Carly. Well with all of the pieces separated from each other, they're light enough for me to carry up the stairs, especially when I'm singing about it

Lewis. Well, carry on!

Carly. Once I got the file cabinet frame, the drawers, and the boxes of paper upstairs, I reassembled everything just in time for the movers to take it away!

Mover. Thanks, Carly!

Carly in background. Thanks, guys!

Carly. Today's adventure taught me one very important lesson... There may not be proof that aliens are out there but there isn't proof that they aren't either. So yours truly is gonna keep looking. And I'm going to do it step-by-step! I can't wait to see what I learn during my next super secret adventure! Until then, I'm Carly Q signing off from this super secret podcast. Arrivederci!