

Who, When, Wow! Mystery Edition

Where Did DB Cooper Go?

Carly. Hey! It's your favorite secret host here, from your favorite secret podcast. Today's mystery is all about an incredibly daring crime that took place thousands of feet up in the air! It's an unsolved mystery ripped right out of the skies, so stick around. I'm Carly Q, and this is Who When Wow, Mystery Edition!

(THEME SONG)

Carly. So today's episode actually starts yesterday, when I finally had my performance review.

Gustavo. Hello Ms. Q thank you for joining me.

Carly. That's Gustavo, he's the guy from Human Resources who runs these things. For those unfamiliar, a performance review is when your workplace tells you how you're doing at your job. It's kind of like an in-person report card.

Gustavo. Reviewing your attendance files, work logs, number of times you've joined in on the Happy Birthday song for coworkers. Oooh thirty seven this quarter, very good!

Carly. When this first popped up on my calendar, I was generally feeling...terrified, since it's always a bit scary to have your work reviewed.

Carly in background. So is there any particular reason for this review?

Carly. See, I was also suspicious that it might mean someone was onto us. What if this was the first step in BUTTHED closing in on us? What if they knew everything we were up to with this top secret podcast and I was headed to BUTTHED jail!?!?

Gustavo. All of your numbers are very impressive Ms. Q!

Carly. But Gustavo didn't say anything about us secretly using the time traveling elevator or investigating the time-sealed files. Basically, he said I've been doing a great job and they're very pleased with my work. Except.

Gustavo. Your handwriting is a little hard to read.

Carly. Hard to read?! What?! I've always known my handwriting isn't exactly perfect, but I at least thought it was legible!

Gustavo. Okay, that's it. See you next year!

Carly. See you then! I was feeling pretty thrown by that, but thankfully I saw a familiar face as I left his office. Amber!

Amber. Hi Carly Q!

Carly. Amber's an HR employee she worked down in the basement office with me when she first started here. We had bonded a bit during that time, so I told her about Gustavo's comment on my way out.

Carly. He's probably always particular about handwriting though, right? Like, that's his thing about everyone?

Amber. I've never heard him bring it up before with anyone. Nice to see you Carly!

Carly. Yeah you too. As she walked off I was definitely starting to freak out.

Carly in background. What does this mean, am I actually a terrible employee because my letters sometimes scrunch together?! What was he really trying to say?

(Soundbite of creak of the basement door.)

Carly. So this morning, when I found Lewis waiting for me down in the basement, I asked him right away what he thought it might mean.

Lewis. Umm it sounds like you're doing a good job and maybe just have sloppy penmanship?

Carly. My rat friend Nibbles chimed in to agree.

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

Carly. No! You two don't get it, there's no way it's that simple!

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

Carly. Because! Bad handwriting has got to be code for something more serious. It MUST somehow be worse than that, I mean, right?!?

Carly. But before they could answer.

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

Carly and Lewis. A new time-sealed file!

Audio File. Event: November 24th, 1971 (BEEP) Seattle, Washington.

Carly. Boeing 727, that is a kind of airplane, right?

Lewis. Do I look like a pilot to you? Ask H-dad!

Carly. I pulled out my handheld digital assistance device.

H-dad. H-dad, powering on!

Carly. And plugged in the clues from the file.

Carly. Boeing 727, Seattle Washington.

H-dad. This likely refers to the hijacking of a flight to Seattle on a Boeing 727 airplane by a man known only as D.B. Cooper. After take off, he told a flight attendant he had a bomb, and demanded ransom money.

Carly. Whoa! Did they give it to him?

H-dad. Affirmative! Upon landing in Seattle, Cooper released the other passengers in exchange for the money and a set of parachutes.

Carly. Parachutes?

Lewis. To jump?

H-dad. Thirty minutes after the plane was back in the air, DB.Cooper jumped out. Neither he nor all of the money were ever found, and was he ever identified. It remains the only unsolved case of air piracy in history. Airplane emoji! Pirate ship emoji.

Lewis. Was he a pirate *magician*? Like How'd he disappear?

Carly. Maybe he was vaporized by the high altitude air? Is that a thing? Or maybe he landed on ANOTHER plane after jumping out of the first one? Ooooooh or maybe he didn't even jump at all, he kind of just shimmied around to the back and stayed there til the plane landed?

Lewis. Preeeeety sure that's impossible.

Carly. Well I guess we're just gonna have to investigate to find out.

Lewis. See you back here at lunch!

Carly. Lewis went back upstairs, while I got down to work. And by "work" I mean writing out various random sentences to try and evaluate my own handwriting.

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

Carly. "Chicken scratch"?! Ok Nibbles, then let's see *your* handwriting!

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

Carly. Okay wow, that is actually very impressive. Who taught you cursive?! And before I knew it.

P.A. Voice. Attention, Butthead employees: get out your troughs and feed bags, it's eat like a horse day! Barley and hay are available for purchase in the cafeteria.

(Soundbite of footsteps coming down the steps.)

Lewis. Lunch time!

Carly. I grabbed Nibbles and H-dad, and Lewis and I took off for the elevator.

(Soundbite of elevator ding.)

Carly. Hi Odie!

Odie. Basement companion! Lewis. How are you today?

Carly. Oh you know, just fretting over a disastrous work issue as usual.

Lewis. Only Carly Q would call a positive performance review "disastrous"!

Odie. And what about a new mystery?

Carly. We've got one of those too! It's all about D.B. Cooper, this guy who hijacked a plane back in the 70's. Heard of it?

Odie. I have! I remember the news reports just after it happened. The authorities searched high and low for this Cooper fellow, combing the woods where they believe he might have landed. But, they were unable to find even a single piece of physical evidence from the crime.

Carly. Oh, a hijacked plane, missing criminal, no evidence. What a mystery

Odie. Indeed it is. Now let's review the time travel rules. No changing anything in the past. And?

Lewis. Be back here by the end of lunch time!

Odie. Lewis got something right? Are there pigs flying outside my window?

Carly. Wait, when exactly are you sending us to? The night of the hijacking?

Odie. That's unfortunately time-sealed, but I can send you to sometime afterwards. I just have one piece of advice for you to keep in mind.

Carly. Yes! Let's hear it.

Odie. Do not jump out of airplanes at nighttime.

(Soundbite of wind chimes.)

Carly. Wait, that's not a mysterious platitude!

Odie. Okay time to go, and bring me back a Rubix cube if you can find one

(Soundbite of elevator travel noises.)

Lewis. That wasn't very wise. I like Odie better when she's giving us riddles. Obviously I knowwww.

Carly. Okay stepping out of the elevator into a quiet stretch of woods? We were right at the shore of a shallow stream, the water glinting in the sunlight. It was pretty beautiful!

Nibbles. Ahh, almost as nice as my favorite sewer back in New York. Just with fewer empty take-out containers, and not as fragrant.

Lewis. You should write tour guides Nibbles, you're a natural.

Nibbles. Am I sensing sarcasm?

Carly. Past some trees I spotted a family beside the water, two parents and some kids, speaking with a woman in uniform. Hey look, over there!

Nibbles. Looks like a police officer!

Lewis. Hold on, I'm confused. Where are we? *When* are we?

Carly. I'm not sure. Maybe a few days after the hijacking?

Nibbles. (sniffs) Nope! The hijacking was in 1971, but the air here smells distinctly of 1980! It's that unique blend of Calvin Klein cologne and snack-pack vanilla pudding. I can almost feel my bangs getting higher and higher

Lewis. 1980?! Why did Odie send us here?

Carly. I don't know. Let's go talk with that police officer and find out! Nibbles hid in my backpack, just as the officer saw us and came over.

Officer Marsdale. Hi there! Officer Marsdale, Washington State Police. You must be the local FBI agents from the field office, yeah?

Carly. Yes we are us, yes,us that is us.

Lewis. Just a couple of professional FBI agents here to uh...take a look.

Officer Marsdale. You got here so quick! Glad you could make it.

Carly. So what's the story, what happened here?

Officer Marsdale. This family's on vacation. Earlier this morning, their young son found three packets of cash along the riverbank.

Lewis. Cash?! How much?

Officer Marsdale. About five thousand eight hundred dollars, in twenty dollar bills. The money's a bit deteriorated, like it's been out here a while. But I just finished calling in the serial numbers, turns out it matches the money given to a plane hijacker ten years ago.

Lewis. D.B. Cooper!

Officer Marsdale. Exactly.

Carly. Officer Marsdale what can you tell us about DB Cooper?

Officer Marsdale. Um, shouldn't *you two* know more about the case? Since you're with the FBI?

Carly. We like to take an open minded approach. Pretend we know nothing.

Officer Marsdale. Okay, well, from what I recall-- This Cooper figure was described as a quiet man, mid-40's, wearing a business suit. Your FBI colleagues looked into a boatload of potential suspects, but pretty much all of them have been ruled out.

Carly. What about the night of the hijacking? What exactly happened?

Officer Marsdale. Cooper let the passengers go in Seattle in exchange for two hundred thousand bucks then made the flight crew take off for Mexico City. But somewhere between Seattle and Reno, he put on that parachute and jumped. The plane landed safely, the crew were all fine, but Cooper was never seen or heard from again.

Lewis. Maybe he had help on the ground? Someone waiting in a getaway car?

Carly. But how would they know where to meet him? Not like they had Find My Friends

Officer Marsdale. Find My Friends? What's that?

Carly. Oh, uh, it's a special, FBI thing! You know there's a lot of agents, and we are all friends, and we like to know where everybody is.

Officer Marsdale. Well that's exactly the issue here. All Cooper said to the pilots was, "Fly to Mexico," but to rendezvous with someone on the ground he would have to coordinate a more specific flight path. Plus it was 8pm on a cloudy night, so he wouldn't have even been able to see the ground.

Lewis. (whispers to Carly) Remember what Odie said about jumping out of planes at nighttime?

Carly. Yep. Don't do it! So was this Cooper guy like an expert skydiver or what?

Officer Marsdale. The investigators considered that, but quickly realized he didn't ask for any gear other than the parachute. Which means he jumped out of a plane, at

nighttime, while it was raining, into a two hundred-mile-an-hour wind, wearing loafers and a business suit.

Lewis. It was raining? That reaaaaaally doesn't sound like a good idea. I mean what about his loafers?

Officer Marsdale. Definitely not something a professional would have done. Which is why lots of folks suspect Cooper didn't survive the jump.

Carly. I certainly see why they'd think that. Alright, I'd like to take a look at the money that was found, is that okay?

Officer Marsdale. Be my guest. I'll be here if you have any questions

Carly. We walked over to a sandy stretch of shore, where the money was laid out on the ground. The bills were half-disintegrated, but still bound in rubber bands.

Carly. So almost 6,000 dollars shows up here, out of the total 200,000. Does that mean Cooper survived the jump, and accidentally dropped this money along the way? OR, does it mean he DIDN'T survive the jump?

Lewis. But if he didn't then where's the rest of the money?

Carly. Maybe we should look around for more? Or anything else that might be related? I mean, if he didn't survive the jump then...shouldn't his remains be somewhere out here too?

Lewis. Ewww, Eww, Eww, Eww, I don't wanna look around for a BODY!
Grooooooooooooooss!

Carly. No bellyaching, only investigating! Alright, Come on! We started walking up the river, keeping our eyes peeled for more evidence. There were various bits of debris caught in the tree roots along the shore. Look! An empty can. Maybe Cooper had a soda on the airplane?

Lewis. Or...maybe it's just trash?

Carly. (gasps) Ooh look! An old lotto ticket. Maybe Cooper tried gambling with the money?

Lewis. Or, maybe it's also just trash?

Nibbles. (gasps) Look! A mini statue of the Seattle Space Needle, in mint condition!!

Lewis. Wow, good eye Nibbles.

Nibbles. What can I say? When it comes to trash hunting, I have a gift.

Carly. Maybe Cooper bought it as a souvenir at the airport?

Lewis. Or.

Carly. Or, yeah, maybe it's just trash. Would be good to throw all this in the proper receptacle though!

Lewis. But no additional evidence anywhere to be seen.

Carly. Sure doesn't look like it. Bummer!

Lewis. Hey, at least the view is nice.

Carly. I looked up, to see we were in the shadow of a beautiful mountain above us. And just then I realized something. Hey Nibbles, you said we're in 1980, right? Any idea when?

Nibbles. (sniffs) Smells like, early spring.

Carly. H-dad, power up, I've got a question for you.

H-dad. H-dad here, moving and grooving and feeling fine.

Carly. What date did Mt. St. Helen's explode?

H-dad. The last eruption of Mt. St. Helen's occurred on May 18th, 1980. Calendar emoji!

Carly. Mm yes, how about that!

Lewis. Uh, what?

Carly. I knew I recognized this mountain, I've seen pictures in an old book on Washington State. It's the famous volcano Mt. St. Helens, which exploded just a few months after this money was found!

Lewis. So?

Carly. So if there WAS more evidence around here, it all would have been destroyed when the volcano erupted! It doesn't explain why nothing else was found *before* the eruption but it definitely explains why nothing more was found after the eruption

Lewis. That is some grade-A sleuthing Carly Q!

Nibbles. Yeah, you could be in the FBI or the CIA or AAA. One of those triple letter words.

Carly. Thanks! H-dad you done analyzing yet? What else have you got on the Cooper case?

H-dad. The investigation into Cooper remained active until 2016, when the FBI suspended it to focus on other cases. Since 1971 they've identified numerous possible

suspects, but none have been confirmed. Faceless suspect emoji! Question mark emojis.

Lewis. So what are the main theories for what happened?

H-dad. Theory #1: Cooper died on the parachute jump, likely from exposure to the elements since he didn't have the proper equipment.

Carly. Theory #2?

H-dad. That he got away with it! If DB Cooper did somehow manage to land and make it safely into hiding, he could have gone anywhere with the money.

Lewis. Or at least the money he didn't drop here along the river.

H-dad. Affirmative! Also, lunch time ended three minutes ago.

Lewis. WHAT?!

Carly. We started racing back for the elevator.

Carly. H-dad why didn't you say something earlier?

Lewis. Yeah a little earlier would've been nice.

H-dad. I didn't want to interrupt your Mt. St. Helens excitement. Volcano emoji!

Carly. Next time interrupt us!

H-dad. Noted!Ok sign emoji

Lewis. Could you update that thing? Clearly it's not working up to speed.

Nibbles. Gosh Carly I hope you don't get caught, between the handwriting and now this you could be in serrrriosss.

Lewis. If I get in trouble because of you Carly Q, you'll never hear the end of thissss.

(Soundbite of elevator travel noises then loud thud.)

Carly. Oh that was a close one, I feel like everyone is a close one.

Odie. Just in time, I was starting to get worried, about Carly. How was Washington?

Carly. Gorgeous! As for D.B. Cooper though, it seems that despite all the mystery, he most likely died on his parachute jump.

Lewis. And if there was further evidence to be found (either of his escape or his death), it was likely destroyed by the eruption of Mt. St. Helens in the exact same area.

Odie. Ah! Lewis what an intriguing historical overlap, I've never considered that. Those really must have been pigs outside that window

Lewis. Not that I don't loooooove hogging credit, but that one was all Carly Q.

Carly. Thanks! Ultimately though, it's like you said Odie: don't jump out of an airplane at nighttime! A pretty straightforward rule to live by.

Odie. It certainly has never led *me* astray. Good work Carly and Lewis. Enjoy the rest of your day.

(Soundbite of walking to desk.)

Carly. As Lewis and I walked back to my desk, I had to confess how good it felt to hear all his nice compliments about the Mt. St. Helens thing.

Lewis. Awww Well it's very impressive! Figuring that out was a stroke of genius. I have to admit you've gotten really good at this Carly Q!

Carly. You're giving me such a confidence boost! In fact, you're kinda making me think I was overanalyzing that whole handwriting comment from my performance review.

Lewis. Noooo really?

Carly. Maybe it's like Odie's riddle today (that was actually totally straightforward and not a riddle at all) -- they like my work here and I'm good at my job! I don't need to read so much into it. Having subpar handwriting doesn't have to be a big deal that secretly means something huge. It's just something to work on!

Lewis. Exactly! Plus, you wanna know a secret?

Carly. What? Your handwriting's bad too?

Lewis. Oh, no, my penmanship is immaculate. Obviously.

Carly. Oh.

Lewis. BUT I am TERRIBLE at texting. See?

Carly. Ice misery scolding Carly A?

Lewis. Nice mystery solving Carly Q. See? These thumbs are type O,C.

Carly. Alright Then we BOTH have things to work on.

Lewis. Guess so! You more than me though.

Carly. Ah what a day! It sure was nice to hear all that from Lewis And what a mystery about D.B. Cooper! Before all this I wasn't really interested in jumping out of an airplane at *any* time of day, but I'm sure not gonna do it at nighttime now! For all of his

careful planning, it seems like that was one element he didn't quite think through. And with today's technology, it's certainly not something he'd get away with nowadays. Anyway, that's it for this episode. Tune in next time for another time-sealed mystery. Until then, this is Carly Q, signing off. And remember: you never heard this!