

Who, When, Wow! Mystery Edition

Who Built The Pyramids? Transcript

Carly. Hello there. Yes, it's me again, your super-sleuth host of a super secret podcast. Today's adventure takes us back to the ancient days of the pharaohs and pyramids. I read that the pyramids can be seen from airplanes thousands of miles in the air above Egypt, but like, WHO built them? I have two theories: giant mummies, or aliens. It's kind of a toss-up right now, but today I'll investigate to find out for sure! I'm Carly Q, and this is Who, When, Wow, Mystery Edition!

(THEME SONG)

Carly.
Good morning, ev-

Coworkers. Shhhhhh!

Carly. Everyone at BUTTHEDquarters that morning was being soooo quiet. What was going on?

Carly. Hey Everybody. What's going on?

Coworker. (whispers) Can't you see?

Carly. No I mean, no. All I could see was a bunch of my coworkers crowded around a table. I wormed my way through the crowd until I could see Lewis working at a table, building a house made of cards.

(Soundbite of Carly going through crowd.)

Carly. He had a base built and was carefully layering one card above the other, going higher and higher. It was already four levels high! I saw Amber and went to stand beside her. Amber, what's Lewis doing?

Amber. Lewis made it to the regional house of card-building championships, so he's practicing.

Carly. Card-building championships? That's a thing?

Lewis. Carly Q! Keep your voice down. I'm on level four and I need to focus.

Carly. OK, I was just asking like that's a super specific kind of skill and I never imagined there would be –

(Soundbite of card house shaking/rattling.)

Lewis. Carly, stop talking. You are making me very stressed out right now.

(Soundbite of card house falling down)

Lewis. Oh No! Nooooooo (crying).

Carly. You know what? I'm gonna go head down to my desk now. Those files aren't going to file themselves.

Lewis. (shouting) Carly Q!

Carly. Didn't have anything to do with that. Wasn't me!

(Soundbite of basement door closing.)

Carly. Ok, so THAT was a pretty bad vibe. I thought Lewis's reaction back there was kiiiinda extreme. I mean, how hard is it to just build another house of cards? Anyway, I had things to do. Another full day entering data into the system. You know, all fun and games for me in the basement.

(Soundbite of floorboard creaking.)

Carly. Hello? Is somebody there? Hello? (pause) Strange. I thought I heard something. Why am I hearing things lately? Is it possible I'm working too hard? (laughs) Definitely not. Ever since I found that mysterious note that said someone was watching me, I've been more creeped out than usual. Luckily, it was just Nibbles this time.

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

Carly. Well, hello there, Nibbles! I am so glad it's you. You honestly might be my only friend today.

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

Carly. I think Lewis blames me for ruining his house of cards. There is no way that was my fault right? I mean, I am very light on my feet and I do not speak very

loudly. I'm mostly always speaking at a kind of neutral, indoor voice, you could call it.

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

Carly. Yeah ok, I better get to work. Let's hope I find something interesting.

(Soundbite of computer typing.)

Carly. I got to work, but the whole time, my mind kept going back to Lewis. I didn't MEAN to distract him! And, really, how hard can it be to build a house of cards again? You just stack them, right? One on top of the other? Luckily just then.

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

Carly. Oooh! What do we have here? It was a time-sealed mystery, just in time! I really needed a distraction from feeling like I'd ruined Lewis' life! Ok, whatdya got?

Audio File. EVENT: (Beep) ancient city of Giza, Egypt (Beep) Pyramids (Beep) 2550 and 2490 BCE (Beep) pharaohs. Their construction (Beep) mystery.

Carly. Oo a mystery? Hah! I can solve it right now: Aliens, obviously! Let's see what H-dad can tell us.

H-dad. Back in action!

Carly. Just gotta enter the keywords here. Egypt, Pyramids, and Pharaohs.

H-dad. The great pyramids at Giza are considered some of the most important archaeological elements of the ancient world.

Carly. Oo I like ancient.

H-dad. The Great Pyramid, which dates back to 2560 BC, almost four thousand years ago is one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. In fact, it is the only wonder that is still standing.

Carly. And it's four thousand years old! Wow.

H-dad. Almost four thousand years ago.

Carly. Yeah, of course. That's what I said.

H-dad. Given their massive size, archaeologists and engineers are still debating exactly how the pyramids were constructed.

Carly. (excited) Aliens. ANCIENT aliens! Or mummies! But, like, GIANT mummies.

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

Carly. Or GIANT ALIEN MUMMIES!

H-dad. The Great Pyramid stands near the Nile River and is colossal. Its base is seven hundred and fifty six feet on each side, and it stands at four hundred and fifty feet high. It is made of over two million stone blocks, all assembled and fitted tightly together.

Carly. Wowwww.

Lewis. Well, well, well. If it isn't Carly Q. Destroyer of Worlds! What are you reading about?

Carly. Oh! Hi Lewis! I'm researching the Great Pyramid of Giza! Trying to figure out how it was built.

Lewis. Doubt anyone distracted the builders.

Carly. Right, anyway. Uh two million blocks of stone in the Great Pyramid alone! I mean, how did the aliens stack them and move them and lift them. Did they have some kind of spaceships that beamed down.

Lewis. Who?

Carly. Aliens. Pay attention, Lewis. How did they get the job done?

Lewis. Hmmm. Let me think. I bet they had to focus and, to help them out, everyone else kept things pretty quiet.

Carly. OK, we get it. Sorry I BREATHED from my human lungs while you were building your house of cards. It's not that big a deal!

Lewis. It's a big deal to me! The regional championships are coming up and I still haven't perfected my triple decker technique.

Carly. Wanna sneak into the Time Elevator and see how to REALLY build something?

Lewis. Maybe, where are we heading?

Carly. Ancient Egypt!

Lewis. You're going back to Ancient Egypt?! I am SO there! I missed out on it before.

Carly. Oh yeah, you had a doctor's appointment or something?

Lewis. Hand massage, actually. Lucien is a miracle worker. My metacarpals never felt so relaxed. I'm not even kidding.

Carly. Well, I'm glad you can come with us this time!

Lewis. Me too! Who knows? Maybe I can pick up a few building tips. I'm not sure what I'm doing wrong with my card houses, but when I get to that fourth story, they just collapse especially if YOU'RE in the room!

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

Carly. I agree, Nibbles. He should leave me out of this. Come on, both of you!

PA Voice. Attention BUTTHED employees! On today's Lunch Menu we are featuring "Salisbury mistake." You heard that right.

Carly. Perfect timing! To the elevator! Nibbles, get into my backpack.

(Soundbite of rat squeaking and everyone walking to elevator.)

Odie. Hey there, Carly Q! Where are you heading to today?

Carly. Hi Odie! Ya think you could take us back to ancient Egypt, specifically to 2500 BCE!

Odie. Four thousand years ago?

Carly. Almost four thousand years ago.

Odie. So I guess you're going to check out the pyramids?

Lewis. Hopefully she doesn't cause them to fall.

Carly. Lewis, calm down. We're trying to find out exactly how they built them, all those years ago. I mean, how could they have the technology to cut and move more than two million stones.

Odie. Let me guess, you think it's aliens?

Lewis. Bingo.

Carly. Or giant mummies but actually that sounds ridiculous when I say it out loud. Aliens is much more logical. But I need proof!

Odie. Well, get into the elevator, my friends! And just remember:

(Soundbite of wind chimes.)

Odie. The tallest tower and the smallest shack are both built the same way, One brick at a time.

Lewis. You have any wise words about cards?

Odie. Lift with your legs (laughs)

Lewis. I don't do manual laborrrr.

(Soundbite of elevator taking off and then landing.)

Carly. We stepped out into a bright sunny day, in a vast desert, to find a massive structure in front of us. It was the base of the pyramid, and it was only about six levels high. There were thousands of people everywhere, talking, working, lifting.

Lewis. Ancient Egypt 2500 BCE, right? Incredible. Look at the construction. Look how they're hauling that stone!

Nibbles. It must weigh a ton! Look at all those men pulling on the ropes.

(Soundbite of work crews.)

Carly. Hmmm they are humans, right? You don't see anything extraterrestrial about any of them? No antennae sticking out of their heads, or giant ears, or big glassy eyes?

Nibbles. Oh they're people alright. 100% homo-sapien. And about your age maybe a little taller. Wearing a stylish head wrap, and nice sandals.

Carly. Uh, Nibs, how do you know so much about ancient Egyptians?

Nibbles. Because one of them is walking over here.

Carly. OH!

Ameny. Hello! Are you the new workers? When did your boat arrive?

Lewis. Uh no. We're not. We're uh.

Carly. Yes! Yes we are! Right, Lewis? We're workers, and we are at work kind of.

Ameny. Excellent! I am Ameny. I was sent to the Nile river bank to wait for the new crew of workers, so, is that a mouse?

Nibbles. Hey, Watch it!

Carly. I quickly stuffed Nibbles down in my backpack. Ameny was looking at us like we'd just landed from a different planet! And THAT'S when I realized that I forgot that the wardrobe converter on the elevator was acting up again! I don't know what he thought of me in my jeans and fleece sweatshirt. But I do know one thing: it was getting pretty hot.

Ameny. Haha. That was an impressive trick! Where ARE you from? I don't recognize your clothing. What is your tribe? Is it from the land beyond the desert?

Lewis. We are from a faraway tribe, called Buttheadonia. We are here as friends. We were sent to bring you good wishes on your construction of the pyramids! We are also trying to learn about how you are undertaking this task!

Ameny. Does everyone in your tribe speak this way?

Carly. No. Just him. He's the tribe mascot.

Ameny. Ah! Well, yes, everyone is curious about how we are building these pyramids. They've been working on them since before I was born!

Carly. And who specifically is working on them?

Ameny. Umm we are. Don't you see us all working?

Carly. I see thousands of men and lots of pulleys and ropes and stones and chisels. But HOW did you come up with the idea for this? Like, whose idea was this?

Ameny. The pharaoh's idea, of course. Built for his glory!

Nibbles. Architect! Ask who the architect is.

Carly. There we go. Architect! That's the word I was looking for! The person who designs the building and makes the plan that the workers follow. But how was I going to ask about the architect without seeming suspicious? What we're wondering is who is the,

(Soundbite of a shout from the work zone as someone calls Ameny's name.)

Ameny. Oh, I have to go! That's my father calling me. He's the head architect.

Carly. Oh, well that was pretty easy. Lewis and I followed him with Nibbles still tucked away in my backpack.

Carly. Where did they find all of these people to work here?

Lewis. I actually think these might be enslaved people, Carly. They might not have a choice.

Carly. I wondered. Maybe the pharaohs had done horrific things and forced people to work on the pyramids. I decided to ask H-dad to find out.

(Soundbite of Carly going through her backpack.)

Nibbles. Hey! That's my tail, Carly. What are you doing?

Carly. Sorry, Nibbles! Excuse me, but I need H-dad. And there it is! Just let me type this in. Great Pyramid. Giza. Enslaved people.

H-dad. Although it has been commonly believed that enslaved people were forced into labor during the construction of the pyramids, recent research by archaeologists has led to the theory that skilled laborers were actually hired and used. This is because there were special tombs found for many pyramid laborers, built close to the pyramids themselves, a sign of honor.

Lewis. OK, well, that's good news. Oooh! Look, look, look at that stone right there! It's massive! They're trying to pull it up the ramp.

Carly. Uhm. Is it supposed to slide like that? That doesn't look good! The ropes are slipping.

(Soundbite of rope slipping and stone tumbling.)

Lewis. This is not gonna end well. Flashbacks to my cards collapsing! I have PTSD!

Carly. Lewis. This is not the same thing. This is unequivocally worse.

Lewis. It's exactly the same!

Nibbles. Let me see ! Let me see! I wanna see!

(Soundbite of rope slipping and stone tumbling.)

Carly. We watched as a massive stone tumbled down the ramp and crashed, breaking into thousands of pieces. Ameny ran back to where we were standing, and even though we were far, the dust from the broken rock filled the air.

(Soundbite of dust and coughing.)

Ameny. Great. Now we have to take a break until the dust settles. You can't see or do much until it does. It looks like we won't have any work for you today, after all.

Lewis. (coughing) Does that happen a lot?

Ameny. No, not really. But some days are harder than others. Many of those stones weigh about four thousand pounds, so it's bound to happen once in a while.

Carly. Four thousand pounds is more than eighteen hundred kilograms. That's really heavy! It's the weight of a full-size truck! Or like forty bags of cement. I figured they must have had some supernatural help.

Carly. This seems like such a LOT of work. Have you had any special help during the construction?

Lewis. Oh, brother. Ignore that question. Look, can you tell us a little about how your father designed this pyramid?

Ameny. Well, he designed it very carefully.

Lewis. Timeless humor.

Ameny. We cut the blocks from quarries. Each one takes a long time to cut out of the stone. Then we have to carry each one to the site we use rollers or sometimes we drag them, pulling them on the sand. It takes a really long time for each stone to arrive. That's why it's a shame we lost one. But this Pyramid has already taken many years. It will need many more before it is finished.

Carly. So basically you did this.

Ameny. One stone at a time. Boring, but true.

(Soundbite of more rumbling and shouting in background.)

Ameny. Oh no. I didn't mean one stone FALLING at a time! We need to secure those rocks.

Nibbles. And we need to get back! Carly!

Carly. Oh! That's right We gotta get back. Thank you, Ameny. I wish we could stick around and watch this but well, it seems like we'd be here for quite some time. Good luck! I am sure it will turn out great.

Lewis. Yes, we're sure it will turn out to be a real wonder.

Carly. Well played.

Ameny. I hope so! We'll keep going, one stone at a time.

Carly. Let's go, quick, quick.

(Soundbite of elevator ding and travel noises then landing.)

Odie. How was Ancient Egypt?

Carly. Well, we saw the Great Pyramid while it was under construction. No aliens, just hard work.

Odie. It's like I said.

(Soundbite of wind chimes.)

Odie. The tallest tower and the smallest shack are both built the same way. One brick at a time.

Carly. Huh Wow Odie, you were right. Again.

Odie. It's a gift. Have a nice day Carly. Lewis.

Lewis. Odie.

Carly. Thank you Odie. That was exactly what Ameny had been telling us. They knew they were building something amazing, but they still had to do it methodically, one stone at a time. Even when they had a setback like the rock falling, they just kept going.

(Soundbite of Carly and Lewis going to office. Soundbite of people cheering.)

Amber. There he is!

Lewis. For moi?

Carly. What's going on, Amber?

Amber. We want Lewis to try this card house again. We all put our money together during lunch and – hey, where were you two? And why are you so dusty?

Carly. Oh, we were in the desert!

Amber. Desert?

Lewis. Dessert! Not desert! We got dessert!

Carly. Right! Exactly. We skipped the main course and went right for dessert. Love that dusty pie!

Amber. (suspiciously) OK. Anyway, we all decided to buy new card decks for Lewis, so he could keep practicing.

Lewis. Why, that is so thoughtful of all of you. Thank you so much!

(Soundbite of cheering.)

Lewis. (clears throat) Here we go.

Carly. You got this.

Lewis. From tall to small, every great structure is built one card, at a time.

Carly. The whole office ended up going to the card-building championship that weekend to cheer Lewis on. Not that we cheered exactly, we just kind of silently sent good energy. He patiently built his card house to eight stories, winning the second place trophy. He did it one card at a time. And that's how I'm building this podcast too. One mystery at a time. But you wouldn't know that because you never heard this.