

Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar
The Matter of the Medium, Well Done

Part 1

Episode 393

Air Date May 14, 1956

FX (Phone Rings)

Johnny: (answering phone) Johnny Dollar.

McCrackin: Hi, Johnny! Pat McCrackin at Universal Adjustment Bureau.

Johnny: Hiya, Patsy, what's on your mind?

McCrackin: Had your fortune told lately?

Johnny: Nope, and I don't think I want to. The last time it came true!

McCrackin: Oh, what was it?

Johnny: Well, this Madam Gaga went into a transom or whatever you call it...

McCrackin: That's trance, boy, as if you didn't know.

Johnny: Yeah, anyhow, she told me I was gonna become an insurance investigator, and I've been stuck with it ever since.

McCrackin: Heh, heh, heh, heh. Sad, sad. So, now, how'd you like to try your hand as a psychic investigator? Johnny: Sure, what do I do?

McCrackin: Ah, drop over, will you?

Johnny: I'm on my way.

Theme music up

Announcer: Tonight – and every weekday night – Bob Bailey in the transcribed adventures of the man with the action-packed expense account – America's fabulous free-lance insurance investigator...

Johnny: Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar!

Theme music up

Johnny: Expense account submitted by Special Investigator Johnny Dollar, to the Universal Adjustment Bureau, Hartford Connecticut. The following is an accounting of expenditures during my investigation of The Matter of the Medium, Well Done.

Theme music up

Expense account item one - \$1.15, Taxi to the offices of Pat McCrackin, of Universal. I

hadn't seen Pat since he'd ruined my Southern California vacation by insisting that I tie it in with the Jolly Roger Matter in the Lamar Case, where my expense account for some, ah, strange reason came out to a right nice figure. I'd even included the case of VO I'd sent him for having handed me those investigations. So I didn't know whether he was gonna be nice to me, or to rub my nose in the dirt. As it turns out, he didn't know either.

McCrackin: Now I don't quite know whether this is going to be another soft touch for that expense account of yours, or a completely crazy one, or real rough.

Johnny: Heh, heh.

McCrackin: Tommy Green seems to think the latter, Though I don't see why, particularly.

Johnny: Yeah, who's Tommy Green?

McCrackin: Mid-Eastern Life, down in New York. Oh, but just bill me, as usual.

Johnny: Sure, okay

McCrackin: Tommy says he's run into this sort of thing before, but not on so big a scale, that's why he's worried about it.

Johnny: Pat, you still haven't told me what!

McCrackin: Oh. Well, one of this clients happens to be a sweet young thing named Carol Sharp, twenty six or seven, beautiful, badly spoiled,

Johnny: Huh, I Love 'em that way!

McCrackin: What?

Johnny: Nothing, go on, go on..

McCrackin: Ah, yes, yes. She lives alone, in a swank penthouse in the East 50's, down there in New York, playgirl. Tommy holds a \$110,000 policy on her, straight life.

Johnny: Beneficiary?

McCrackin: Her family, mother, a couple of kid brothers..

Johnny: No father?

McCrackin: No, no. The others live over in Marchand, PA. That's where her father made the dough that keeps her in the penthouse, and keeps the others living well in the old family manse.

Johnny: So, what's the problem? Somebody threatening her life?

McCrackin: I don't know, Johnny, depends on what you mean by threatening. She just requested Tommy to change beneficiaries.

Johnny: What's so unusual about that?

McCrackin: Well, one of them's to be a man named Tony Riccardo for \$30,000...

Johnny: Oh ho, so she's fallen for the guy who's making the, ah, "nice gesture"

McCrackin: Maybe, we don't know yet. The other is a so-called medium, Madam Celia something.

Johnny: Oh-oh. I've heard it before. Turn the family fortune over to me and I'll get in touch with dear, departed papa.

McCrackin: That's what it looks like from here. She's being took!

Johnny: Well, how can it be any of our business?

McCrackin: Well, last time Tommy was requested to change a beneficiary to a medium, his hale and hearty young client suddenly turned up dead.

Johnny: And they pinned it on the medium?

McCrackin: mmm hmm. Apparently this sort of thing goes on quite a bit. So, it has Tommy worried, so he asked for you.

Johnny: Alright, just what do you want me to do?

McCrackin: What do you want to do?

Johnny: Break out the old crystal ball, Pat, and we'll see.

Music up

Johnny: Expense item 2 – Transportation, Hartford to New York and the offices of Mid-Eastern, where Tommy Green turned out to be a mild-mannered, thoroughly likeable, successful insurance broker.

FX (Door opens, then closes. Chair scrapes floor.)

Green: Come in, Mr. Dollar. Glad you could make it.

Johnny: How do, Mr. Green.

Green: Sit down, won't you?

Johnny: Thanks.

Green: I suppose Pat McCrackin has told you what's on my mind.

Johnny: Only that you think one of your clients is being taken for the proverbial sleigh ride by some spiritualist.

Green: As you no doubt know, Mr. Dollar, spiritualism is a recognized, well established religion.

Johnny: Sure, of course.

Green: However, as in any other, there are charlatans and some of these "mediums", as they call themselves, take literally millions of dollars every year from people by trickery, by producing weird manifestations that appear to be genuinely supernatural.

Johnny: Tommy, I know what you mean.

Green: My own mother took a beating from one of those phonies, when I was just a kid. You know, promised messages from father after he died, and at twenty-five bucks a try.

Johnny: Wow. No wonder you're suspicious of them.

Green: And especially of one Madam Celia Morgana Morgana.

Johnny: Have you seen this, ah, madam?

Green: No, but I believe you'd better.

Johnny: Hmmm. Have you changed, what's her name, Carol Sharp's policy yet?

Green: No, but I'm afraid I can't stall her much longer.

Johnny: And you're afraid that once you do change it, Carol ain't gonna be long for this world, huh?

Green: It's happened before, Dollar.

Johnny: Yeah. Well, I can't just barge in on this madam Morgana Morgana, announce that I'm an insurance investigator, and that another.... Hey wait a minute, what's the name of this other beneficiary?

Green: Tony Riccardo.

Johnny: Yeah, who is he?

Green: All I know is what Carol's told me

Johnny: Love affair?

Green: Yeah, he sounds like a playboy. They do a lot of nightclubbing together.

Johnny: Money?

Green: I don't know.

Johnny: Family?

Green: I don't know that either.

Johnny: But he's in for thirty of \$110,000 if anything happens to her.

Green: If we change the policy. How are you gonna start?

Johnny: Well, if this Carol Sharp is all Pat McCrackin says she is, this case could have a very pleasant beginning.

Music up

Johnny: I stuck around with Tommy Green long enough to listen to him verify what Pat had said about Carol's family wealth, etcetera, take a look at a snap shot of her and get her address. Item 3- \$1.80 – Taxi to the Bell Towers at 614 East 52nd Street, a magnificent modern apartment hotel at the edge of the East River. Real swank. The place even had it's own private docks, with several well-kept cruisers tied up and even a small sea plane. Pat, I warn ya – this expense account ain't gonna be small!

Manager: Yes, may I help you sir?

Johnny: Yes, you can. I'd like a small apartment for a few days.

Manager: Are you alone, sir?

Johnny: Yes.

Manager: Well, we still have a small five room penthouse suite for \$1500 a month.

Johnny: Huh?

Manager: With complete maid service, of course...

Johnny: Oh, of course.

Manager: And on a minimum one year lease, of course.

Johnny: Look, all I want is a bedroom/living room type of thing. I may be here only a week or so.

Manager: Oh, well in that case I'm afraid there's nothing we can do for you, unless...tell me sir, do you have any recommendations from any of our tenants?

Johnny: Look, I'm an insurance investigator. Here - my card. And I want something as close as possible to Miss Carol Sharp's apartment, but I don't wanna have to rob Fort Knox...

Manager: Private Investigator, did you say?

Johnny: Yeah, that'll do.

Manager: Oh, dear! Surely Miss Sharp can't be in any kind of...Why, think what it would mean to our reputation, ah, Mister, oh, Mr. Dollar.

Johnny: Stop worrying, will ya? She isn't in any kinda trouble – yet. But for reasons, they, ah, well they don't particularly concern you, I need to be as close to her as I can.

Manager: Ah, what a pleasant thought. If only I...

Johnny: For the same reason I don't want her to know what my business here is.

Manager: Of course, believe me, Mr. Dollar, I'm the very soul of discretion.

Johnny: Good, see that you stay that way. Now, have you got a room or two for me?

Manager: Ah, let me see... Now she's in Penthouse A on Floor 12. Hmmm. There is a two room on Ten – very nice at \$325 a week, with, ah, complete service, of course.

Johnny: Okay, I'll take it.

Manager: Very well, just sign this card, please. And, oh, dear, I'm afraid I must have a week in advance.

Johnny: Oh, sure, sure, what's a measly three hundred and twenty five bucks?

Music up

Johnny: When the two bellboys, who carried up my two bags at a buck apiece settled me into room 1013, I must admit the place looked almost worth the tab. Tastefully furnished, spit and polish clean, with a plate glass panorama view of the bustling East River. Yeah, I wished for a moment that I could afford this sort of lodging. First thing I did was telephoned an old pal.

Sarge: Detective division, Sergeant Stinger.

Johnny: Hey, look, Sarge, I need a rundown on a dirty crook.

Sarge: Who's speaking, please?

Johnny: He's going around acting like an insurance dick, but he's a crook.

Sarge: Oh, what's his name?

Johnny: Dollar, Johnny Dollar. I tell you that punk is as crooked as they come.

Sarge: Don't go any further, we know all about him. We got word here in New York, and we'll put a stakeout on him the minute we spot his hideout.

Johnny: That, copper, I can give you.

Sarge: Good, Johnny, just where you staying?

Johnny: Hi, you old reprobate, I'm at the Towers, East 52nd.

Sarge: The tow...Eh, expense account, huh?

Johnny: How'd you guess. I want to see you.

Sarge: In exactly 21 minutes I'll punch the time clock and be over.

Johnny: Room 1013.

Sarge: Right, oh, and, ah, be sure it's with soda...

Johnny: Easy, boy, give you any encouragement, and you'll want to name the brand of scotch!

Music up

Johnny: Item 4- \$12.20. One bottle of scotch, and setups for two.

Sarge: Sure, Johnny. Knew her from when I was doing the nightclub beat.

Johnny: Then she's lived in town for quite a while, huh?

Sarge: Yeah, couple of years at least.

Johnny: How much do you know about her, Randy?

Sarge: Hmmm, not much. She's loaded, throws her money around like it's confetti.

Johnny: Yeah, I figured that – when I found her staying here. Father left it to her.

Sarge: Eh, coal miner, wasn't he?

Johnny: Owned a big quarry in Frankville, Pennsylvania, somewhere near Marchand.

Sarge: Well, it must have paid off good in the old days. Uh, but tell me, what's – ah, you wanna give me a refill?

Johnny: Yeah, sure. Ever hear of a Madam Celia Morgan Morgana?

Sarge: Huh! I've chased that blousy old phony from one end of the island to the other. (imitating Morgana) "I look into zee crystal ball and I see into zee past, zee present, zee future and into your pocketbook."

Johnny: Yeah, and, man, she could.

Sarge: I think she's operating somewhere over on the Jersey side now.

Johnny: Here.

Sarge: Thanks.

Johnny: But she's still operating.

Sarge: Operating with real class, the last time we picked her up and kicked her out.

Johnny: How do you mean?

Sarge: Nice apartment, over here on the East Side. Classy clientele.

Johnny: Hmmm.

Sarge: Say, is Carol Sharp hooked by her?

Johnny: Appears so. Just how does she work?

Sarge: Well, the usual way the phonies do. Goes into a trance, writhes around like a sea-sick rattlesnake, and then gives with the voices.

Johnny: Voices?

Sarge: You know, speaks with the tongues of the departed.

Johnny: Hey, look, where's the money angle in this?

Sarge: Well, she makes like the trances cause her great agony of body and mind, starts with the pitch about doctor bills. And, the more clients can afford, the more they pay.

Johnny: And they don't get wise?

Sarge: Ah, she's smart. Works it like a serial story, you know, continued next week.

Johnny: No. I don't know. Brief me.

Sarge: Well, at each séance she tells them just enough to whet their appetite for more. Leads right up to the next hot bit of information, has 'em hanging on every word, then "bingo" the trance is over.

Johnny: Ah...

Sarge: (imitating Morgana) "However, eef you come back next week when I recover my strength..."

Johnny: Heh, heh.

Sarge: So, they pay her off, and they're back a week later to play games with her again.

Johnny: I don't know. It seems pretty obvious to me.

Sarge: Well, that's because you've never attended a séance run by an artist at it. Hey, why don't ya?

Johnny: I think I will.

Sarge: I'll see what I can dig up for ya.

Johnny: You mean there are still some going on around town?

Sarge: Dozens, hundreds, probably. Kick them out of one place, they move to another, unless you can tie a serious rap on them.

Johnny: Which reminds me, Tommy Green told me...

Sarge: Yeah, Yeah, handled that one myself. A Madam Gabor Charnowsky. Got a sweet old man to sign over his fortune, and had him knocked off. Oh, it's a dirty racket.

Johnny: Yeah, religion, science, the professions, they all leave an open door to the

racketeers, I guess. Okay, set up a seance for me, Randy, and meantime run me a make on Tony Riccardo, will ya?

Sarge: Riccardo?

Johnny: Yeah, he's the other one Carol Sharp wants to name as a beneficiary.

Sarge: Besides the medium?

Johnny: Yeah. Beneficiary of a whopping big life policy.

Sarge: Okay, good, Johnny. I'll call you later.

Music up

Johnny: While I took my time showering and changing clothes, I racked my brain trying to cook up a smooth way to meet Carol Sharp. Under no circumstances did I want her to suspect the reason behind my interest in her, at least not for the present. Requisite number one, then, meet the gal. I was just tying my tie when the phone rang.

Johnny: Johnny Dollar.

Sarge: Randy, Johnny.

Johnny: Oh, Hi, Ran. Set up a date with a medium?

Sarge: Yeah, for tonight, but that's not what I'm calling about. Johnny, I could write a book for you.

Johnny: Huh?

Sarge: On Tony Riccardo. And I don't think you'd like it. You seen him yet?

Johnny: No, but I will, soon as I can locate him.

Sarge: Well, if he finds out what you're working on, he'll locate you.

Johnny: Fine.

Sarge: Yeah, just be sure you see him first. And that you're carrying a gun.

Johnny: Thanks, Randy.

Music up

Announcer: Now, here's our star to tell you about tomorrow's intriguing episode of this week's story.

Johnny: Tomorrow – well, sometimes the best laid plans can take a terrible beating when a lovely girl steps into the picture. Join us, won't you?

Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar.

Music up

Announcer: Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar, starring Bob Bailey, is transcribed in Hollywood. It is produced and directed by Jack Johnstone, who also wrote tonight's story. Be sure to join us tomorrow night, same time and station, for the next exciting episode of Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar. Roy Rowan Speaking.

Music up