

# The Party (1968)

## Storyline

After getting fired from General Federal Studios, Junior Artiste, Hrundi V. Bakshi, ends up getting invited to an upscale party thrown by the wealthy Clutterbuck family. After his tryst with his shoe, he is aided by an inebriated butler and a baby elephant to create hilarious chaos for the hosts and their chic guests. *Written by rAjOo (gunwanti@hotmail.com)*

## Synopsis

Sellers plays Hrundi V. Bakshi a bumbling, yet lovable actor from India who tries endlessly to cope with the high-tech, high society around him from 1960's Hollywood and yet makes a shambles of everything.

The movie defines and is defined by the 1960's, as Blake Edwards uses every gimmick from the drunken server to pot-smoking musicians to set the mood. Bakshi continues about the party where he is mistakenly found, and explores the gadgets and gimmicks while making friends with several wonderful (albeit stereotyped) characters.

Notably, he alienates the director from his earlier acting attempt when he rescues a lady from the director's unwanted amorous approaches. Our unsung hero also makes allies with the children and the household pets while continuing to "tear down the house."

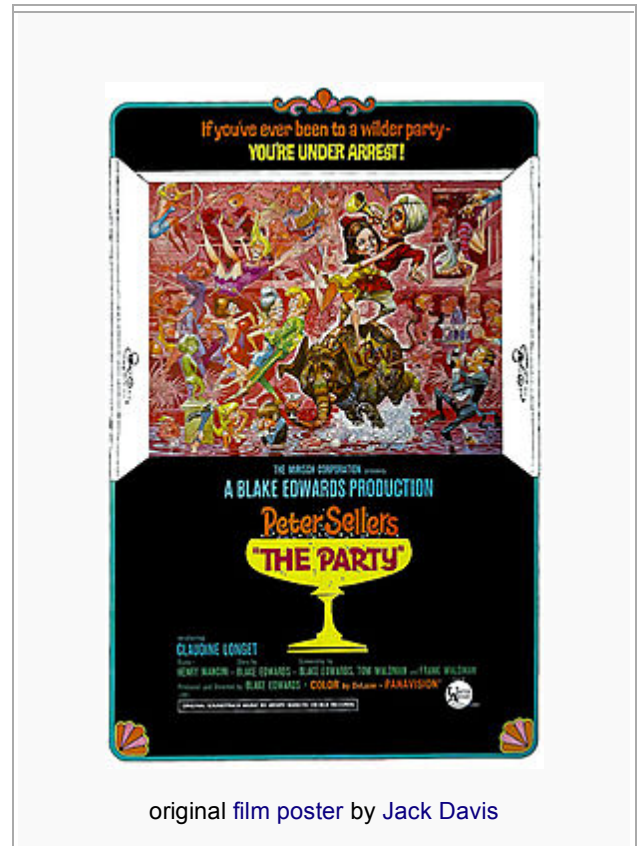
The film starts slowly, almost yawningly, but bulids towards the climax at the end with the following ingredients: Soap, Russians, a swimming pool and an elephant. Throw in a little peace, love and plenty of booze and you get the picture!

A riotous film, one of my all time favorites. It brought Sellers and Edwards together for

their best (IMHO) collaboration.

PS watch out for the classic 3 wheeler Morgan sports car at the end - fits Peter Sellers' persona perfectly.

[[www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)]



<b>Directed by</b>	Blake Edwards
<b>Produced by</b>	Blake Edwards
<b>Written by</b>	Blake Edwards Frank Waldman Tom Waldman
<b>Starring</b>	Peter Sellers Claudine Longet Gavin MacLeod J. Edward McKinley Denny Miller Steve Franken
<b>Music by</b>	Don Black Henry Mancini
<b>Running time</b>	99 minutes
<b>Country</b>	United States
<b>Language</b>	English

[Wikipedia]

# ***The Party* (film)**

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

***The Party*** is a 1968 comedy film directed by Blake Edwards, starring Peter Sellers and Claudine Longet. The film has a very loose structure, and essentially serves as a series of set pieces for Sellers's improvisational comedy talents. The comedy is based on a fish-out-of-water premise, in which a bungling Indian actor accidentally gets invited to a lavish Hollywood dinner party and "makes terrible mistakes based upon ignorance of Western ways."

*The Party* is considered a classic comedic cult film. Edwards biographers Peter Lehman and William Luhr said, "*The Party* may very well be one of the most radically experimental films in Hollywood history; in fact it may be the single most radical film since D.W. Griffith's style came to dominate the American cinema." Film historian Saul Austerlitz wrote, "Despite the offensiveness of Sellers's brownface routine, *The Party* is one of his very best films... Taking a page from Tati, this is neorealist comedy, purposefully lacking a director's guiding eye: look here, look there. The screen is crammed full of activity, and the audience's eyes are left to wander where they may."

## **Plot**

A film crew is making a *Gunga Din*-style costume epic. Unknown Indian actor Hrundi V. Bakshi (Sellers) plays a bugler, but continues to play even after being shot and after the director (Herbert Ellis) yells "cut." Bakshi later accidentally blows up an enormous fort set rigged with explosives. The director fires Bakshi immediately and calls the studio head, General Fred R. Clutterbuck (J. Edward McKinley), about the mishap. Clutterbuck writes down Bakshi's name to blacklist him, but he inadvertently writes Bakshi's name on the guest list of his wife's upcoming dinner party.

Bakshi then receives his invitation and drives to the party. Upon arrival at Clutterbuck's home, Bakshi tries to rinse mud off his shoe in a large pool that flows through the house, but he loses his shoe. After many failures, he is reunited with his shoe.

Bakshi has awkward interactions with everyone at the party, including Clutterbuck's dog Cookie. He meets famous Western movie actor "Wyoming Bill" Kelso (Denny Miller), who gives Bakshi an autograph. Bakshi later accidentally shoots Kelso with a toy gun, but Kelso does not see who did it. Bakshi feeds a caged macaw bird food from a container marked "Birdie Num Num" and accidentally drops the food on the floor. Bakshi at various times during the film activates a panel of electronics that control the intercom, a fountain replica of the Manneken Pis (soaking a guest), and a retractable bar (while Clutterbuck is sitting at it). After Kelso hurts Bakshi's hand while shaking it, Bakshi sticks his hand into a bowl of crushed ice containing caviar. While waiting to wash his hand in the bathroom, he meets aspiring actress Michèle Monet (Longet), who came with producer C.S. Divot (Gavin MacLeod). Bakshi shakes Divot's hand, and Divot then shakes hands with other guests, passing around the fishy odor, even back to Bakshi after he has washed his hand.

At dinner, Bakshi's place setting right by the kitchen door has a very low chair that puts his chin near the table. An increasingly drunk waiter named Levinson (Steven Franken) tries to serve dinner and fights with the other staff. During the main course, Bakshi's roast Cornish game hen accidentally catapults off his fork and becomes impaled on a guest's tiara. Bakshi asks Levinson to retrieve his meal, but the woman's wig comes off along with her tiara, as she obliviously engages in conversation. Levinson ends up brawling with other waiting staff, and dinner is disrupted.

Bakshi apologizes to his hosts, then needs to go to the bathroom. He wanders through

the house, opening doors and barging in on various servants and guests in embarrassing situations. He ends up in the back yard, where he accidentally sets off the sprinklers. At Divot's insistence, Monet gives an impromptu guitar performance of "Nothing to Lose," to impress the guests. Bakshi goes upstairs, where he saves Monet from Divot's unwanted sexual advances by dislodging Divot's toupee with the toy gun. Bakshi finally finds a bathroom, but he breaks the toilet, drops a painting in it, gets toilet paper everywhere, and floods the bathroom. To avoid being discovered Bakshi sneaks out on the roof and falls into the pool. Monet leaps in to save him, and he's coerced to drink alcohol to warm up. Bakshi is unaccustomed to alcohol, and he struggles to put on a dry red terry toweling jumpsuit. He finds Monet crying in the next room and consoles her. Divot bursts in and demands Monet leave with him. Monet says no, and Divot cancels her screen test for him the next day. Bakshi convinces her to stay and have a good time with him. They return to the party in borrowed clothes as a Russian dance troupe arrives. The party gets wilder, and Bakshi offers to retract the bar to make room for dancing. He accidentally opens a retractable floor with a pool underneath, causing guests to fall in the pool. Levinson makes more floors retract, and more guests fall in. Clutterbuck's daughter arrives with friends and a baby elephant painted with hippie slogans. Bakshi takes offense and asks them to wash the elephant. The entire house is soon filled with soap bubbles from the cleaning.

Back at his home, Divot suddenly realizes that Bakshi is the fired actor who blew up the set, and he races back to the party. As the band plays on, Clutterbuck tries to save his suds-covered fine art paintings. The air conditioning blows suds everywhere as the guests dance to psychedelic music, and Clutterbuck's distraught wife falls into the pool twice. Divot pulls up as police and fire department personnel work to resolve everything. Bakshi apologizes one last time to Clutterbuck as Divot reveals who Bakshi

is, but Clutterbuck accidentally chokes a waiter instead of Bakshi. Kelso gives Bakshi an autographed photo and Stetson hat as Bakshi and Monet leave in Bakshi's Morgan three-wheeler car. Outside her apartment, Bakshi and Monet appear on the verge of admitting that they have fallen for each other. Bakshi gives Monet the hat as a keepsake, and she says he can come get it any time. Bakshi suggests he could come by next week, and she readily agrees. Bakshi smiles and drives off as his car backfires.

## Cast

- Peter Sellers as Hrundi V. Bakshi
- Claudine Longet as Michele Monet
- Natalia Borisova as Ballerina
- Jean Carson as Nanny
- Marge Champion as Rosalind Dunphy
- Al Checco as Bernard Stein
- Corinne Cole as Janice Kane
- Dick Crockett as Wells
- Frances Davis as The Maid
- Danielle De Metz as Stella D'Angelo
- Herb Ellis as Director
- Paul Ferrara as Ronnie Smith
- Steve Franken as Levinson
- Kathe Green as Molly Clutterbuck
- Allen Jung as Cook
- Sharron Kimberly as Princess Helena
- James Lanphier as Harry
- Buddy Lester as Davey Kane
- Stephen Liss as Geoffrey Clutterbuck
- Gavin MacLeod as C.S. Divot
- Jerry Martin as Bradford
- Fay McKenzie as Alice Clutterbuck
- J. Edward McKinley as Fred Clutterbuck
- Denny Miller as 'Wyoming Bill' Kelso
- Elyane Nadeau as Wiggy
- Thomas W. Quine as Congressman Dunphy
- Timothy Scott as Gore Pontoon
- Ken Wales as Assistant Director

- Carol Wayne as June Warren
- Donald R. Frost as Drummer
- Helen Kleeb as Secretary
- George Winters as Cliff Hanger
- Linda Gaye Scott as Starlet

Vin Scully is uncredited onscreen, but his voice can be heard announcing a Los Angeles Dodgers game on the kitchen radio.

## Production

*The Party* was the only non-Pink Panther collaboration between Sellers and Edwards. Producer Walter Mirisch knew that Sellers and Edwards were considered liabilities; in his autobiography, Mirisch wrote, "Blake had achieved a reputation as a very expensive director, particularly after *The Great Race*." Sellers had played another Indian man in his hit film *The Millionaire*, and a similar klutz as Inspector Clouseau.

The film's interiors were shot on a set, at the MGM lot. The original script was only 63 pages in length. Edwards later said it was the shortest script he ever shot from, and the majority of the content in the film was improvised on set.

The film draws much inspiration from the works of Jacques Tati; Bakshi arrives at the party in a Morgan three-wheeler which may suggest Monsieur Hulot's car in *Monsieur Hulot's Holiday*. However, it was not the same car (Salmson AL3). The entire film storyline is reminiscent of the Royal Garden restaurant sequence of *Playtime*; and the comedic interaction with inanimate objects and gadgets parallels several of Tati's films, especially *Mon Oncle*.

## Release

The film was released on April 4, 1968, the same day as the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr..

## Cultural influence in India

The late Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was very fond of repeating Bakshi's line, "*In India we don't think who we are, we know who we are!*", the character's reply to a hostile "who do you think you are?"

## Soundtrack

The score of *The Party* was composed by Henry Mancini, including the song "Nothing to Lose." Mancini, commenting on audience reactions, noted, "That's what I get for writing a nice song for a comedy. Nobody's going to hear a note of it." During a scene later in the film, the band can be heard playing "It Had Better Be Tonight," which was a song Mancini composed for the first *Pink Panther* film. The compact disc was originally released on August 20, 1995 by BMG Victor.

## Track listing

1. "The Party" [Vocal] 2:14
2. "Brunette in Yellow" 2:56
3. "Nothing to Lose [Instrumental]" 3:18
4. "Chicken Little Was Right" 2:54
5. "Candlelight On Crystal" 3:05
6. "Birdie Num-Num" 2:21
7. "Nothing To Lose [Vocal]" 2:25
8. "The Happy Pipers" 2:17
9. "Party Poop" 2:34
10. "Elegant" 4:44
11. "Wiggy" 3:02
12. "The Party [Instrumental]" 3:12