

The Apartment (1960)

Oscars for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Art Direction, Best Editing, Best Actor (Jack Lemmon), Best Actress (Shirley McLaine),

Probably needs to be cut. Regards what's come to be known today as sexual harassment.

As Baxter comes through the door, Sheldrake is leafing through Dobisch's efficiency report. He looks up at Bud through a pair of heavy-rimmed reading glasses.

SHELDRAKE
Baxter?

BUD
Yes, sir.

SHELDRAKE
(studying him)
I was sort of wondering what you looked like. Sit down.

BUD
Yes, Mr. Sheldrake.

He seats himself on the very edge of the leather armchair facing Sheldrake.

SHELDRAKE
Been hearing some very nice things about you -- here's a report from Mr. Dobisch -- loyal, cooperative, resourceful --

BUD
Mr. Dobisch said that?

SHELDRAKE
And Mr. Kirkeby tells me that several nights a week you work late at the office -- without overtime.

BUD
(modestly)
Well, you know how it is -- things pile up.

SHELDRAKE

Mr. Vanderhof, in Public Relations,
and Mr. Eichelberger, in Mortgage
and Loan -- they'd both like to
have you transferred to their
departments.

BUD

That's very flattering.

Sheldrake puts the report down, takes off his glasses, leans
across the desk toward Bud.

SHELDRAKE

Tell me, Baxter -- just what is it
that makes you so popular?

BUD

I don't know.

SHELDRAKE

Think.

Bud does so. For a moment, he is a picture of intense
concentration. Then --

BUD

Would you mind repeating the
question?

SHELDRAKE

Look, Baxter, I'm not stupid. I
know everything that goes on in
this building -- in every
department -- on every floor --
every day of the year.

BUD

(in a very small voice)
You do?

SHELDRAKE

(rises, starts pacing)
In 1957, we had an employee here,
name of Fowler. He was very popular,
too. Turned out he was running a
bookie joint right in the Actuarial
Department tying up the switchboard,

figuring the odds on our I.B.M. machines -- so the day before the Kentucky Derby, I called in the Vice Squad and we raided the thirteenth floor.

BUD
(worried)
The Vice Squad?

SHELDRAKE
That's right, Baxter.

BUD
What -- what's that got to do with me? I'm not running any bookie joint.

SHELDRAKE
What kind of joint are you running?

BUD
Sir?

SHELDRAKE
There's a certain key floating around the office -- from Kirkeby to Vanderhof to Eichelberger to Dobisch -- it's the key to a certain apartment -- and you know who that apartment belongs to?

BUD
Who?

SHELDRAKE
Loyal, cooperative, resourceful C. C. Baxter.

BUD
Oh.

SHELDRAKE
Are you going to deny it?

BUD
No, sir. I'm not going to deny it. But if you'd just let me explain --

SHELDRAKE

You better.

BUD

(a deep breath)

Well, about six months ago -- I was going to night school, taking this course in Advanced Accounting -- and one of the guys in our department -- he lives in Jersey -- he was going to a banquet at the Biltmore -- his wife was meeting him in town, and he needed someplace to change into a tuxedo -- so I gave him the key and word must have gotten around -- because the next thing I knew, all sorts of guys were suddenly going to banquets -- and when you give the key to one guy, you can't say no to another and the whole thing got out of hand -- pardon me.

He whips out the nasal-spray, administers a couple of quick squirts up each nostril.

SHELDRAKE

Baxter, an insurance company is founded on public trust. Any employee who conducts himself in a manner unbecoming --

(shifting into a new gear)

How many charter members are there in this little club of yours?

BUD

Just those four -- out of a total of 31,259 -- so actually, we can be very proud of our personnel -- percentage-wise.

SHELDRAKE

That's not the point. Four rotten apples in a barrel -- no matter how large the barrel -- you realize that if this ever leaked out --

BUD

Oh, it won't. Believe me. And it's not going to happen again. From now on, nobody is going to use my apartment --

In his vehemence he squeezes the spray bottle, which squirts all over the desk.

SHELDRAKE

Where is your apartment?

BUD

West 67th Street. You have no idea what I've been going through -- with the neighbors and the landlady and the liquor and the key --

SHELDRAKE

How do you work it with the key?

BUD

Well, usually I slip it to them in the office and they leave it under the mat -- but never again -- I can promise you that --

The phone buzzer sounds, and Sheldrake picks up the phone.

SHELDRAKE

Yes, Miss Olsen.

INT. SHELDRAKE'S ANTEROOM - DAY

Miss Olsen is on the phone.

MISS OLSEN

Mrs. Sheldrake returning your call -- on two --

She presses a button down, starts to hang the phone up, glances around to see if the typists are watching, then raises the receiver to her ear and eavesdrops on the conversation.

INT. SHELDRAKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Sheldrake is talking into the phone.

SHELDRAKE

Yes, dear -- I called you earlier --
where were you? Oh, you took Tommy
to the dentist --

During this, Bud has risen from his chair, started inching
toward the door.

SHELDRAKE

(turning to him)

Where are you going, Baxter?

BUD

Well, I don't want to intrude --
and I thought -- since it's all
straightened out anyway --

SHELDRAKE

I'm not through with you yet.

BUD

Yes, sir.

SHELDRAKE

(into phone)

The reason I called is -- I won't
be home for dinner tonight. The
branch manager from Kansas City is
in town -- I'm taking him to the
theatre Music Man, what else? No,
don't wait up for me -- 'bye,
darling.

(hangs up, turns to Bud)

Tell me something, Baxter -- have
you seen Music Man?

BUD

Not yet. But I hear it's one swell
show.

SHELDRAKE

How would you like to go tonight?

BUD

You mean -- you and me? I thought
you were taking the branch manager
from Kansas City --

SHELDRAKE

I made other plans. You can have both tickets.

BUD

Well, that's very kind of you -- only I'm not feeling well -- you see, I have this cold -- and I thought I'd go straight home.

SHELDRAKE

Baxter, you're not reading me. I told you I have plans.

BUD

So do I -- I'm going to take four aspirins and get into bed -- so you better give the tickets to somebody else --

SHELDRAKE

I'm not just giving those tickets, Baxter -- I want to swap them.

BUD

Swap them? For what?

Sheldrake picks up the Dobisch reports, puts on his glasses, turns a page.

SHELDRAKE

It also says here -- that you are alert, astute, and quite imaginative --

BUD

Oh?

(the dawn is breaking)

Oh!

He reaches into his coat pocket, fishes out a handful of Kleenex, and then finally the key to his apartment. He holds it up.

BUD

This?

SHELDRAKE

That's good thinking, Baxter. Next month there's going to be a shift in personnel around here -- and as far as I'm concerned, you're executive material.

BUD
I am?

SHELDRAKE
Now put down the key --
(pushing a pad toward him)
-- and put down the address.

Bud lays the key on the desk, unclips what he thinks is his fountain pen, uncaps it, starts writing on the pad.

BUD
It's on the second floor - my name
is not on the door -- it just says
2A --

Suddenly he realizes that he has been trying to write the address with the thermometer.

BUD
Oh -- terribly sorry. It's that
cold --

SHELDRAKE
Relax, Baxter.

BUD
Thank you, sir.

He has replaced the thermometer with the fountain pen, and is scribbling the address.

BUD
You'll be careful with the record
player, won't you? And about the
liquor -- I ordered some this
morning -- but I'm not sure when
they'll deliver it --

He has finished writing the address, shoves the pad over to Sheldrake.

SHELDRAKE

Now remember, Baxter -- this is going to be our little secret.

BUD

Yes, of course.

SHELDRAKE

You know how people talk.

BUD

Oh, you don't have to worry --

SHELDRAKE

Not that I have anything to hide.

BUD

Oh, no sir. Certainly not. Anyway, it's none of my business -- four apples, five apples -- what's the difference -- percentage-wise?

SHELDRAKE

(holding out the tickets)

Here you are, Baxter. Have a nice time.

BUD

You too, sir.

Clutching the tickets, he backs out of the office.