

## COMPANY CHRISTMAS PARTY NEW YORK STYLE

By JAMES COLLINS

The company hosted an annual Christmas party, for over 900 employees, at Leonard's in Manhasset New York in 1965. This was a glitzy, spacious, lavish, center which could handle a dozen weddings at the same time and had parking for a few thousand cars. The entrance was a huge, mall like, glass enclave with an overhead chandelier the size of a Buick. Celebrities threw memorable parties here and its reputation was widely known embellished by the fact that it was owned and run by the Mafia.

Initially starting at 8:00 PM, the cocktail hour was actually scheduled to run three hours with tables covered with hors-d'oeuvres, carving tables and alcohol of every type including fountains of martinis. Dinner was scheduled to start at 11:00 PM. The hordes were lined up at the door before opening time to grab a table and the groups from the manufacturing floor were in the largest numbers. They each had to put on a name tag, find their colleagues, and hang up their coats. Then it was a night of jubilation.

Eddie S, a production control supervisor in his early forties, was there with Sandy, his young bride of nineteen. He was retired from the Navy as a Boson's Mate and was known to like his liquor. This was his kind of party – OPEN BAR ALL NIGHT. At 9:00 Eddie was face down in the carpet and his young wife was distraught. She was crying and didn't know what to do. She couldn't lift him or move him.

Big Al from the committee was located and he came over to assist. One look and he knew Eddie was out for the night and the young wife, Sandy, was a basket case and would be a cloud on the party.

"Sandy, your name is Sandy right, like it says on your name tag? Eddie is done for the night, no use hanging around you got to take him home."

"But I can't! I can't lift him. I can't get him to the car and I can't drive. I only have a learners permit," cried Sandy as her voice rose to a crescendo and the tears flowed.

"Whoa! Calm down! Relax! We can help we have a lot of people here and we'll get you home," assured Big Al.

With that he drafted four big stalwarts from the next table and they hoisted Eddie up and took him and Sandy to their car in the parking lot and loaded Eddie into the back seat totally passed out.

"But I can't drive. I only have a learner's permit and Eddie can't drive in his condition. Can you take us home?"

"Sorry, I have to control the whole event. I can't leave and these guys are not much better off than Eddie. You'll have to drive home yourself. Don't worry about the learners permit, as long as you have a licensed operator with you it's OK for you to drive."

**“But Eddie’s passed out”**

**“It doesn’t matter; the law in New York only requires that a licensed operator be in the car. He could be asleep. It’s all legal. You’re all right.”**

**“But I can’t even pull the car out of the space.”**

**“Don’t panic. We’ll pull the car out and take you to the parking lot entrance. You make a left onto Jericho Turnpike. Go slow. You go through two traffic lights and at the third light you make a right. That’s your development and a quarter mile ahead is your house. Just go slow.”**

**Down the road was a squad car with two bored troopers sitting in the dark watching Leonard’s. The Mafia was always up to something and surveillance was the order of the day.**

**Sandy slowly, eased the nose of her car out of the entrance. Four dozen cars passed on either side but she was nervous and cautiously waited a long time for a large opening on both sides. The she jerkily pulled out onto the turnpike unsteadily pulled over to the right lane and preceded at ten miles an hour.**

**Joe, the sergeant in the passenger seat, watched this slow motion erratic activity and was immediately alert.**

**“Bill, we got something suspicious here. Keep the lights off and ease out into traffic but stay well back until we find out what’s up.”**

**Sandy came up to the first light; stopped; waited till the green light changed and took off again at ten miles an hour. The police took notice but kept well back. This was repeated at the second light.**

**Jericho turnpike took a slow turn to the left after the second light. Eddie’s inert form shifted in the back seat; the passenger side rear door opened and Eddie rolled out of the car into the ditch.**

**“Holy shit they just dumped a body. Hit the lights key the siren and cut them off,” shouted Joe. “We got a Mafia hit right in front of us.”**

**Sandy was concentrating on the road, the dashed line, the speedometer and the sounds of the car.**

**The flashing colored lights in the rear view mirror, the shrieking siren, the passing squad car that cut her off startled her ; drove Sandy’s heart into her throat and jacked her blood pressure to new heights. She jammed on the brakes. Two cops jumping out of each side of the squad car with drawn guns; coming on the run at Sandy generated screams and tears. The shocks were like punches to her throat.**

**“Get out of the car with both hands in the air. We saw you dump the body back there!”**

**Sandy turned; looked in the back of the car.; screamed, “Eddieeeee,” threw open the door and ran back the way she came.**

**“Don’t shoot Bill. Chase her down. She’s not armed.”**

**Sandy and the two officers found Eddie lying in the ditch nosily snoring without a care in the world.**

**Sandy told the police the story; they all returned to the party; verified the story and the cops escorted them home.**

**More than four decades have passed since that memorable Christmas party but at all company reunions the story is still repeated to gales of laughter. The Mafia has their reputation and Eddie and Sandy have theirs**

**THE END**