SNOW JOB

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FADE IN:

EXT. CHANNEL 10 NEWS STATION - NIGHT

Heavy snow falls on an already blanketed and nearly empty parking lot.

A SUV parks in the front row. LORRAINE SANCHEZ (40), pretty even bundled up against the cold, gets out and hurries inside.

INT. STATION - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Lorraine stomps the snow off her feet as KEN (25), effeminate and well-dressed, enters from a hallway.

KEN Morning, sunshine. How'd you get here?

Lorraine smiles as she peels off earmuffs and scarf.

LORRAINE I got the SUV in the divorce. The only bad thing is the heater does a number on my hair. I guess I can tie it back.

KEN Well, you manage to look great even in crappy weather.

LORRAINE (beaming) Thanks. Gotta look good for my morning show debut.

Lorraine and Ken talk as they walk deeper into the building.

KEN

Yea, about that... um, they just closed the roads. Nobody else can get in. We're going to just use the network feed and run prerecorded stuff.

Lorraine loses her smile.

LORRAINE No! I'm going on the air even if I have to work <u>all</u> of the desks by myself. Ken's eyes go wide as they continue walking.

KEN

(panicky)
How are you going to do that?!
It's just you, me, and Fred. He
knows how to run a camera, but
there are three of them, one of
him, and he's exhausted.
 (gasps)
I don't know how to run the booth!

Lorraine motions for calm.

LORRAINE

Fred can show you how to switch between cameras. He can handle the cameras while I work the desks. We'll be fine.

KEN You won't hurt me if things fall apart?

LORRAINE No. I promise. I'm in anger management now, so you're good.

Ken looks skeptical, but nods and rushes off. Lorraine hurries into an office with numerous desks.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dim lights with numerous monitors playing video. Various LEDs BLINK on a huge control board. FRED (35), stubbled and wearing wrinkled clothes, nods off in a chair. Ken hurries in and taps him on the shoulder, startling him awake.

FRED Yah!... Will you please knock?!

KEN Sorry. Look, we have a problem.

Fred glances at the board.

FRED What? Feed's good. No problem.

Fred rubs tired eyes and yawns.

KEN

No, numbnuts, there is a problem. There's like twenty feet of snow out there and the roads are closed.

Fred jumps to his feet.

FRED Closed?! How the hell are we supposed to get home?

KEN We're not. Lorraine thinks the three of us can do the show.

FRED

She's crazy.

KEN

Maybe, but we're going to try. Show me how to switch between cameras, then get your ass in the studio. You're running the cameras.

FRED

But...

Ken pantomimes zipping up his lips.

KEN

Eh, eh, eh.

INT. STUDIO - LATER

Lorraine, hair now pulled back, checks a lavalier microphone pinned under her blouse and inserts the "power-pack" in her waistband.

LORRAINE

Testing one, two...

Ken's amplified voice comes over a loudspeaker.

KEN (V.O.) Uh, hear you loud and clear.

LORRAINE How's the camera look?

KEN (V.O.) Looks good to me. LORRAINE I was talking to Fred.

KEN (V.O.) He took a smoke break.

LORRAINE Now? We're on in a couple of minutes.

She hurries to get into position.

Fred, winded and frazzled, runs in. He leaves a trail of snowy footprints behind him.

FRED I'm here. I'm here.

He notices the trail and heads towards a janitor's closet. Ken hurries on set.

> KEN Don't worry about it. I need you on the cameras.

FRED But I need to wipe it up before somebody busts their ass.

KEN (V.O.) No time. Chop. Chop.

FRED

But...

Ken claps his hands several times.

KEN More work, less talk.

Ken hurries away as an annoyed Fred tries to adjust a boom mike... and whacks Lorraine on the head.

LORRAINE

Ow!

FRED Sorry! I'm sorry!

She visibly struggles for self-control.

LORRAINE It's okay... really. (MORE) LORRAINE (CONT'D) Besides, I'm wearing a wireless, so we don't need the boom mike.

Through the control booth window, Ken, wearing a headworn microphone, hovers over the control board.

KEN Uh, we're going hot in thirty seconds.

FRED Live. We're going <u>live</u> in thirty seconds.

KEN

Whatever.

Lorraine checks her clothes as she eases onto the host's couch and smiles real big. Fred puts on a headworn microphone and waves to get Lorraine's attention. She notices and gets serious.

INTERCUT among the three.

Fred holds up four fingers... three... two... one... points at Lorraine.

Lorraine smiles as a light on top of the camera turns ON.

LORRAINE Good morning and welcome to a special morning edition. I'm Lorraine Sanchez. Due to the weather, we are short on staff, so I'll be filling in for our regular hosts. Let's start with our local headlines...

Ken looks confused as he tries to switch cameras.

Fred notices the light comes ON over the sports desk camera and dashes to it.

INSERT SPORTS DESK POV

Unmanned and bare.

RESUME SCENE

Ken frantically taps buttons.

KEN

Shit!

The sports desk camera light turns off and the news desk camera light comes ON. Fred darts towards it and slips on melted snow. He smacks into the camera, sending it spinning.

INSERT NEWS DESK CAMERA POV

The studio spins like a merry-go-round rider's view until it stops on the control room window. Ken grins sheepishly and waves.

RESUME SCENE

Fred struggles to his knees and turns the news desk camera towards Lorraine. Without missing a beat...

LORRAINE That was Ken, one of the guys working tirelessly behind the scenes to make this happen. Now, onto the news... well, this teleprompter doesn't seem to be working too well, so let's see what we can pull off the webpage.

INSERT NEWS DESK CAMERA POV

Lorraine looks down and works a touch-screen. She alternates reading and looking into the camera.

LORRAINE (CONT'D) Police raided a local brothel last night and arrested the mayor's son...

A picture-in-picture (PIP) appears over her shoulder showing... a kitten jumping and skipping at its reflection in a mirror. Lorraine looks to a monitor O.S. and scowls.

> LORRAINE (CONT'D) That's obviously <u>not</u> the right video, so let's try this again.

The PIP switches to a line of cars stuck in deep snow at a traffic light.

LORRAINE (CONT'D) And... the winter weather has traffic backed up like the winner of a cheese eating contest... I did not come up with that... okay. Onto sports.

Ken taps a button as Lorraine sprints for another desk.

CAMERA POV

... of the green screen area.

RESUME SCENE

Fred slides at the green screen camera like a hockey player body checking an opponent.

Ken makes an 'O' face and hurriedly taps another button.

Fred scowls as the green screen camera light goes out and grimaces as the sports desk camera light turns on.

SPORTS DESK CAMERA POV

Lorraine plops into the sports desk chair, a lock of hair loose, and half of her out-of-frame. She scoots into frame while the view goes in the opposite direction. She hurriedly scoots back to where she was... as the camera jerks in the opposite direction. Back and forth, back and forth, until...

> LORRAINE (CONT'D) (loud whisper) Fred! Stop.

The view centers on her.

RESUME SCENE

Ken sighs.

Fred sighs.

Lorraine forces a smile again and brushes the lock of hair back, which promptly springs loose again. Irritated, she sits for a second.

> LORRAINE (CONT'D) Uh, the NBA is locked in yet another strike and the other sport seasons haven't started yet, so motorsport's about it right now... who cares? We can see crazy drivers on the local interstate... well, not with the storm, but... oh, forget it... let's do the weather. That one's easy.

She jumps out of her seat and sprints to...

GREEN SCREEN CAMERA POV

Lorraine stomps to a halt like a drunken tap dancer. She looks slightly to one side and steps to the side of the frame, another lock of hair flying loose in the process.

> LORRAINE (CONT'D) Uh, Ken... I'm still on the green screen.

There is a pause, then... the kitten reappears behind her, dancing and twirling at its own reflection.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

Seriously?

A webcam view of a tropical beach appears.

LORRAINE (CONT'D) That's more like it. Wow, wouldn't you like to be there right now?

Topless women walk into view.

LORRAINE (CONT'D) Oh, hey! Uh, yea...

The image quickly disappears and a weather map appears.

RESUME SCENE

She points to parts of the blank green screen as she talks.

LORRAINE (CONT'D) So, we have a bunch of white clouds... snow, I bet, since it's white too, uh, coming from this direction... west! Yes, from the west and dumping more of this... sh--stuff on us. Meanwhile, this green stuff...

She squints at the teleprompter.

LORRAINE (CONT'D) Rain... coming from the south will... bring in more moisture that will mix with cold air from the north and dump up to another four feet... four feet! Holy shcow... uh... nother four feet of the white stuff on us. Temperatures will dip into the teens... As Lorraine drones on O.S., Ken collapses into a chair. Fred darts into the booth and points to a digital clock on the wall.

FRED Hey, tinkerbell. Keep an eye on the timer. When it hits the thirty minute mark,...

Fred points to a t-shaped handle.

FRED (CONT'D) Pull that lever <u>down</u>.

Ken nods numbly like a post-procedure colonoscopy patient.

KEN Yea, got it, Ted.

FRED Fred. My name is Fred.

Ken smiles wearily and gives him a thumbs up.

Fred darts into the studio and hits the melted snow. He slides into the green screen camera, LAUNCHING it at Lorraine.

GREEN SCREEN CAMERA POV

Lorraine goes bug-eyed as her face quickly fills the VIEW and smacks the lens... then disappears, leaving makeup prints.

RESUME SCENE

Fred lies on his back, blinking at the ceiling as he moans.

Lorraine rolls to her feet and sprints O.S., her hair even more disheveled.

Ken falls across the control board as he reaches for a button. A laxative commercial pops up on a screen.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.) Tired of the discomfort and bloating? Do you want relief from...?

Ken stabs at a button several times before hitting it. He sags with fatigue and tries to sit down, only to miss the chair and crashes to the floor.

Lorraine plops onto the couch, nearly falling off the end. Her suit jacket sits askew, one side almost off the shoulder. She quickly straightens herself and smiles into the camera as the light on top of it turns on. LORRAINE

Well, that's it. Catch us again at the top of the hour. Now back to New York.

Fred raises a hand... the light goes off... and the hand drops. SEQUENCE OF SHOTS of the three of them sagging in exhaustion. Ken shuffles out of the control booth.

> KEN I thought that would never end.

Fred looks at him wearily.

FRED

The hell you say... we get to do that <u>five</u> more times.

Ken's eyes roll back slightly and he passes out. Lorraine looks down in annoyance, then to Fred.

LORRAINE Then there were two...

INT. STUDIO - LATER

Lorraine sits on the couch, once more looking poised and polished.

LORRAINE

Well, that wraps it up for the morning show. Thanks for your patience as we worked through this as best we could. I hope you have a great day and try to have some fun in the snow.

She holds her smile as Fred wearily holds up a hand. The light on top of the camera goes out and the hand drops.

FRED

We're clear. (muttering) Thank God for small miracles.

Ken runs onto the studio floor in a panic.

KEN The boss just called... he wants us to do the midday report too. CLOSE OUT on Lorraine grinning big and Fred crestfallen.

FADE OUT:

THE END