

SNOWMAN

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. AIRPORT TARMAC - BEFORE DAWN

A lone executive jet waits to be boarded. Lights are visible in the cockpit, the boarding stairs are down.

A dark limo swings into view. The chauffeur hurriedly pops out to open the rear door.

A business suit exits carrying a folded newspaper.

From the opposite side, another business suit exits carrying a large briefcase and a laptop slung over his shoulder.

The figures walk immediately to the aircraft and mount the stairs. The door swings shut and the WHINE of engines breaks the silence.

As the limo pulls away the jet is already taxiing toward the runway.

With a sudden ROAR, the aircraft tilts radically upward and BLASTS into the still-starlit sky.

INT. AIRCRAFT COCKPIT - MINUTES LATER

The CO-PILOT gives the pilot a thumbs up. He smiles, pulls off his head phones, slides a curtain aside and enters...

THE PASSENGER COMPARTMENT

The roomy, upscale interior will easily seat eight. Two men, seated across the aisle from one another are the sole occupants.

GREGORY SNOW, corporate workout maven, unfolds the Wall Street Journal. He is fit, hawk-eyed and self-confident to the point of arrogance with a trace of gray at the temples. He is also nursing a chronic cough.

TED MORRIS, corporate attorney, rummages thorough his briefcase pulling out files and opening his laptop. His actions reflect thoroughness, competence and loyalty. He's the classic company man, slight mid-drift bulge but a definite player.

The two men function in parallel but unconnected worlds, immersed their work.

CO-PILOT  
Morning Mr. Snow.

Snow glances up, nods...coughs.

SNOW

Bob.

Ted Morris puts out a hand.

TED

Ted Morris. Good morning. Smart  
liftoff.

CO-PILOT

Mr. Snow doesn't like waiting.

TED

Gotcha.

The co-pilot continues to the back of the plane where he disappears behind another curtain. He immediately reappears carrying a tray of pastry and a container of coffee.

CO-PILOT

Coffee?

SNOW

(suppressed cough)

Just leave it Bob.

The co-pilot sets the tray on a fold-out table.

CO-PILOT

OK, Mr. Snow. If you need anything  
just buzz.

TED

Thanks, Bob.

SNOW

What's the forecast?

The co-pilot turns to face Snow whose head is still buried in the newspaper.

CO-PILOT

Savannah has sunny skies,  
temperature in the mid-seventies.  
Perfect for golf, I'd say.

Snow lowers the paper. A thin line, possibly a smile, crosses his lips.

SNOW

I should be so lucky. But maybe I  
can throw off this cough. Damn New  
York weather.

The co-pilot nods to Ted and returns to his seat.

Ted offers to pour Snow a cup, but he declines with a shake of the head.

TED  
 Don't see any decent way of  
 breaking Thursten's grip on the  
 company. I mean, he IS Morgan  
 Electronics.

Snow lowers his newspaper, directs a level gaze at Ted.

SNOW  
 "Decent" is NOT in my vocabulary.  
 I've polled the board. Thursten's out.

TED  
 He'll sue...tie everything up in  
 the courts.

SNOW  
 (cough)  
 No. I'll tie everything up in the  
 courts. At 91 just how big a threat  
 do you think Thursten can be?

Ted finishes pouring himself a cup of coffee and hooks a donut from the tray.

TED  
 And, the family?

Snow resumes reading the paper.

SNOW  
 History. South lost the war. Remember?

Ted turns to look out the window at the rising sun.

EXT. SAVANNAH AIRPORT - DAY

MONTAGE OF SCENES

- Another limo wheels into view even as the stairs to the plane are being lowered.

- Exiting the aircraft is Snow, first, followed by Ted and briefcases.

-- The co-pilot watches from the top of the stairs as the two men stride to the waiting limo with its open rear doors and attendant driver.

- The limo pulls away leaving the jet sitting on the runway in front of the "EXECUTIVE AIRCRAFT" terminal.

INT. SAVANNAH LIMO - MINUTES LATER

The DRIVER speaks into the car phone.

DRIVER

Please inform Mr. Thursten's office that Mr. Snow and party are 10 minutes out.

(pause)

Thank you.

Ted flips through computer screens with various financial graphs, bar charts and text bullets.

Snow watches freeway traffic and office buildings flash past the window. Compared to Ted, he seems almost disengaged.

Ted snaps the computer screen shut, looks out his window, then at Snow.

SNOW (O.C.)

(COUGH)

TED

Any final instructions?

Snow doesn't bother turning around.

SNOW

Just follow my lead. Don't volunteer anything.

TED

Got it.

The limo pulls into a long drive past beds of blooming peonies, fancy irises and well-attended roses. The vehicle glides soundlessly to a halt in front of a tastefully modern office structure.

The limo driver smartly opens the door for Snow who emerges, sizing up the real estate in a glance.

The two men disappear into the interior of the building under the facade that reads "MORGAN ELECTRONICS."

From above, an intelligent and cultured woman's face in her late thirties (MORGAN THURSTEN), partially obscured by reflections, turns away from the window where she has been observing their arrival.

INT. MORGAN ELECTRONICS/LOBBY - DAY

Snow strides purposefully to the receptionist's desk.

SNOW

Gregory Snow.

The RECEPTIONIST responds with a blazing smile and unmistakable southern accent.

RECEPTIONIST

They're expecting you Mr. Snow.  
Fifth Floor Board Room. The  
elevator's on your left.

Snow continues toward the elevator with Ted and briefcase struggling to keep pace. He enters the open door, COUGHS into his fist, and pushes the button.

Ted manages to slide in just as the doors envelop them.

INT. MORGAN ELECTRONICS/FIFTH FLOOR - SECONDS LATER

The elevator door opens to reveal yet another blazing smile and southern accent, this time in the form of an EXECUTIVE SECRETARY.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Welcome to Morgan Electronics Mr.  
Snow. If you gentlemen will follow  
me please.

The secretary's attractive rear end precedes the two men down a long wood-paneled hallway past executive suites with glimpses of walnut desks, leather hob-nail chairs, paintings of hunting scenes and other posh accouterments.

The secretary pushes open the board room door. She pauses to allow them to enter.

INT. MORGAN ELECTRONICS/BOARDROOM - DAY

Ted and Snow are the first to arrive.

More wood paneling and plush carpet. A long, inlaid boardroom table dominates the scene.

Dramatic photographs of electronic components are hung gallery style on the walls.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The others will be here momentarily.  
Coffee service is on your left.  
(pointing to a silver service)  
May I pour you a cup?

Snow shakes his head in the negative...slight cough.

TED

No thank you, we're fine.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Should you need anything, there's a  
phone on the credenza.

As the secretary exits, Ted selects a chair well back from the head of the table and opens his briefcase. He peers inside as if somehow the contents might have changed from 10 minutes ago.

Out the arched windows, a small metropolis rises in the distance.

Snow strolls casually about the room gazing at the photos on exhibition.

Ted, thumbing through his files, looks up in mild surprise.

Morgan Thursten is quietly observing them from the doorway. She exudes health, wealth and self-assurance. Her smile is warm; her eyes, observant.

Ted realizes he is open mouthed...and shuts it.

MORGAN

Good morning!

Morgan extends her hand which Ted clumsily accepts.

TED

Ted Morris.

Morgan turns to greet the other man.

MORGAN

Then you must be the... Snowman.

Snow visibly winces.

MORGAN

(smiling)

Couldn't resist, Mr. Snow.

SNOW

Greg.

MORGAN

Delighted. Welcome to Savannah. I'm Morgan Thursten.

TED

Ah, Morgan Electronics.

MORGAN

Guilty as charged.

SNOW

(suppressed cough)

We seem to be early.

MORGAN

Actually a couple of the board members were delayed briefly, but they are now in route.

(addresses Snow)

I wonder if we might take this opportunity to speak privately?

TED

I'll step outside.

MORGAN

No, no please be seated. My office is just across the hall. We can talk there.

Snow glances at Ted.

SNOW

Save me a seat, I'll be  
(cough)  
back.

INT. MORGAN ELECTRONICS/MORGAN'S OFFICE - SECONDS LATER

Morgan's office is, in a word, "elegant." Original art, handwoven rugs, real Tiffany lamps, hand-carved desk.

Morgan motions Snow to an armchair. She takes the one opposite, languidly crossing a heart-stopping pair of legs.

Snow waits for her to break the silence which she does after an appraising gaze that leisurely assesses his haircut, clothing and posture.

MORGAN

You find my office...intimidating?

SNOW  
Should I?

MORGAN  
Yes.

SNOW  
(cough)  
Sorry.

MORGAN  
Cold?

SNOW  
Manhattan weather for you.

MORGAN  
Perhaps we can warm you  
up...Savannah, I mean.  
(breath)  
Time is at a premium so I'll come  
right to the point. I know you've  
been canvassing the board.

Snow starts to reply but Morgan holds up her hand in a "stop" gesture.

MORGAN(CONT'D)  
And...I know you BELIEVE you have  
the votes to oust Daddy from the  
company.

SNOW  
I prefer the term "retire."

Morgan's eye's flash as she looks directly at Snow. Her soft-spoken, southern-fried demeanor suddenly evaporates replaced by a hard-edged, up-east accent.

MORGAN  
Don't fuck with me Snowman. My  
heart may be in Dixie but my  
brain's straight off Wall Street.  
(level gaze)  
Morgan Electronics is Daddy's life.  
I won't see him murdered by  
unprincipled greed.

SNOW  
The company's nearing default. I'm  
here to save it.

MORGAN  
The Street's littered with  
companies you've "saved."

Snow savors his opponent: beauty, brains and guts...to his way of thinking-- the real trinity.

SNOW  
What do you bring to the  
table...beyond family ties I mean?

MORGAN  
Beyond family ties?

Morgan re-crosses her legs.

MORGAN  
I would say a whole body of knowledge.

Snow is captivated but not captured. He returns her level gaze.

SNOW  
(slight cough)  
Would you...  
(clears throat)  
consider a merger out of the question?

Morgan glances at her wrist watch, twists the elegant band, rises to her feet.

MORGAN  
I could be open to the right party.

Snow rises as well.

SNOW  
Then I look forward to exploring  
this possibility in depth.

The executive secretary appears at the door.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
Miss Thursten?

Morgan glances her direction.

MORGAN  
We're coming Violet. Thank you.

Morgan gestures for Snow to precede her.

MORGAN (CONT'D)  
After you Mr. Snow.

SNOW

Greg. Please.

Morgan smiles with her generous mouth, but her eyes are cool, appraising.

FADE TO:

INT. MORGAN ELECTRONICS/BOARDROOM - SOME TIME LATER

ROBERT THURSTEN, thin as a reed but sharp as a tack at 91, presides over what he will come to realize is his last board meeting as president.

Snow is seated to his immediate right with Morgan opposite. Twelve members of the board (all older men) round out those at the table.

Ted sits off to one side fingering his laptop.

ROBERT THURSTEN

Well gentlemen that concludes our business until tomorrow morning then.

(turning to Snow)

I know Gregory will have an eye-opening presentation for us...Right Greg?

Snow shows just the slightest trace of a thin smile.

SNOW

I hope to keep your attention, sir.