

XEROS PICKUPS - 2013

By

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INSET SCENE 1B: NEWS STUDIO

Two newscasters, ALAN and BECKY. Alan's in his twenties, has an almost hyper, impatient energy. Both are smiling.

ALAN

Construction resumed this morning on the Wayside colony on Venus. Terraforming should be finished within two years. A domed city, safe and ready for the colonists. They're even bringing in some real living forests from Washington state, here on earth.

Images appear on the screen as he speaks of the planet, the city, the forests being moved through space.

BECKY

Washington. That's where your parents are from, isn't it, Alan?

Michael smiles thinly.

ALAN

I grew up in Portland, actually. Right coast. Wrong state. (laughs, then smiles at the camera) They're transporting two entire forests, using a scoop the size of an aircraft carrier. Then planting them in the west quadrant, so the colonists will feel right at home. All under the dome, of course. The trees would die in a few minutes in the planet's real atmosphere.

BECKY

Just like us. (laughs)

ALAN

Like you anyway. (she looks at him oddly. He chuckles) I'm joking. Terraforming should be completed within two years.

## INSET SCENE 2A:

Becky and Alan in the TV news studio. Alan looks a little tense, a forced smile.

ALAN

... Mandy Baker, or the woman who was going by that name. The bodies have been identified as her husband Michael and daughters, Karen, Ellie and Sandra. Citizens are warned not to approach her. She's considered armed and highly dangerous.

BECKY

Are there others? Like her, I mean?

ALAN

The police think so. But there's no reason to panic. They're doing a full investigation, and Onatronics has been shut down until further notice. It could all just be a misunderstanding. But there's nothing to worry about. It's all under control.