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*dateStamp25001220; GalactiComm livecast, StarDate Instant News, Stellar News Service (SNS)*

The commercial for a new seaweed protein based sandwich bread ends abruptly and a young, attractive, dark skinned woman looks up to the camera as the SNS News Alert logo flashes on the screen. The fast paced alert music repeats in the background.

“A programming note for our repeaters and affiliates, this alert broadcast is being sent live throughout our distribution network and not as a pakcast. Please see your distribution subchannel for additional information. For our viewers, this just in to the SNS newsroom, there has been a massacre in the Bozeman star system. I’m Tracey Halizuto at the SNS newsdesk. Our onsite reporter, Don Burkman, has an update for us.” She puts her hand up to the audio relay in her left ear, “Don please tell us about this developing situation in Bozeman.”

The picture splits and shows a lower quality video feed of a middle aged man wearing a polo shirt and a jacket with the SNS logo on the upper left breast. He adjusts his earpiece before bringing the microphone up to his mouth. “Tracey,” he begins, “I am coming to you live from the hangar deck of the FPC *Mistress of Mercy*. My team and I have been onsite in the Bozeman system for nearly a week now. Today is the first opportunity we have had to contact anyone outside the star system. Hawdon Communications personnel have setup an emergency relay station to replace the one that was destroyed here.”

While he speaks, the camera pans around the hangar. In the background, rescue shuttlecraft are being unloaded and launched as quickly as possible. Those still alive are being rushed into a large lift and whisked away to elsewhere in the ship. The dead, in bodybags, are collected in a marked off area surrounded by heavily armed FPC People’s Navy Marines.

“From the briefings we’ve been given so far by the Captain, someone attacked the small mining colony over four weeks ago. It took just over two weeks for anyone to learn that something had happened here. The UPC, FPC, and several nearby Non-Affiliated Worlds have sent security, investigative, and medical support to the area.”

“Don, forgive the interruption, but could the station have simply self-destructed?” Tracey interrupts.

“That thought crossed my mind initially, but the scale, Tracey,” he replies, “whoever did this attacked the station, destroyed it, and then went hunting throughout the nearby asteroid field destroying mining facilities. The only survivors have been those who made it to life pods or their facilities were too small to be noticed. They managed to survive for weeks until help arrived. I have several reports recorded with the haunting tales of the attack and their survival. Now that I have a link back to the studios, we can begin uploading them.”

While the conversation continues, the picture switches to B-roll footage of the twisted debris that was once a large mining station. Several ships can be seen circling the area.

“Any word about the attackers?” she asks.

He clears his throat before continuing, “Tracey, they, they being the FPC military, do not know what happened to the attackers, several ships were destroyed here, but it is not yet known if the attackers were among them. As soon as we got here, the Captain called for reinforcements immediately. Several frigates and cruisers have been brought into the area for support and defense. So far, the UPC and FPC have been cooperating with each other, but everyone is still uneasy with the two large military forces standing off from each other.”

He looks around the area then drops his voice, “Tracey, as you know, these mining stations are hardened facilities and are very resilient to damage. Having talked to several members of the crew off camera as well as some mining engineers, I can report that whoever attacked the station used ship busting weapons to break up the station. These are basically low yield tactical nuclear weapons; some of the injuries I’ve seen recently would corroborate that assessment.”

“Who would be able to use such weapons?” Tracey asks.

“Obviously the UPC and FPC field such weapons in their fleets and home defense units. I am not sure about the Non-Affiliated navies or other groups such as corporate defense or pirates. The cost of obtaining and the expertise required to use them is not an easy thing to come by,” he replies.

Just as Tracey starts asking her next question, Don interrupts, "Uh Tracey, I see a group of armed FPC Marines and an officer heading our way. We were not given restrictions about 'casting, but I will get ..."

The picture begins to jerk around showing FPC Marines taking the news crew into custody and turning off the camera.

"Don! Don! Can you hear me?" Tracey looks anxiously at the static filled screen. After a moment, she looks back to the camera, "It looks like we have lost our feed in the Bozeman system. Once we have the technical issues worked out, we will come back to you with more information about the tragedy that has happened there."

The SNS News Alert logo flashes on the screen as the fast paced alert music repeats in the background. The feed cuts back to the original pakcast.