

01 - A - INTERSTITIAL SCENE 1.

STATIC BURST--

WE CUT IN ON A BRITISH NEWS REPORT.

MALE CO-HOST:

(ENGLISH) Welcome back to those of you able to still pick up this television feed...

A lot of time and attention is focused on world issues at the moment following the flare. The riots, the economy, even the estimated death toll. With the recent chaos at the NASC press conference regarding NASC and CimmTech, much attention has been taken from the spotlight of the Aethon space mission itself. But we sent Amanda Wallace to America to speak with some people who might have a unique insight...In the American State of Alabama...

AMANDA WALLACE:

(ENGLISH) This is Amanda Wallace reporting live--

HUGE RADIO GLITCH. SIRENS IN THE DISTANCE OF THE AUDIO.

--here in Fultondale, Alabama in the USA. With much of the US still in the dark--this community, also without power, has banded together around the focal point of Tawley Elementary School. You can see behind me that a prayer shrine has been set up for the crew members on board the Aethon. Earlier today we were able to record some footage.

GLITCH--

THEN WE SWITCH TO PRE-RECORDED EDITED VIDEO.

A SMALL GROUP OF PEOPLE SING 'AMAZING GRACE.'

"AMAZING GRACE / HOW SWEET THE SOUND / THAT SAVED A WRETCH / LIKE ME. I ONCE WAS LOST / BUT NOW AM FOUND / WAS BLIND BUT NOW / I SEE." (SONG IS UNDER DIALOGUE)

PERSON 1: (AMERICAN) It's just terrifying. All of it. We don't know most of what's going on out there. We only have people like you coming in from elsewhere to tell us.

AMANDA WALLACE: But what about the flare itself?

PERSON 1: Oh...I mean...my son happened to be on the NASC feed when the warning went out about the flare. He texted us and we at least got to take some minimal precautions...But what can you do in twenty minutes? You know? What can anybody do in twenty minutes? Pull two hundred in cash out of the ATM and...what?

AMANDA WALLACE: (V.O.) This elementary school was renamed after a previous notable student, Alex Tawley, Commander of the Aethon. Following the announcement of his role in the Aethon's mission. NASC even offered to let the school create an experiment that would be taken on-board into close solar orbit.

STUDENT 1: (AMERICAN) We wanted to know what would happen to an ant farm in space. How many would live or die or if they would stop digging or eating or just die?

AMANDA WALLACE: What do you think will happen?

STUDENT 2: I think they'll get dizzy and throw up.

FELICIA BRYANT: It's a simple experiment, but it was actually in line with NASC's efforts for community inclusion.

AMANDA WALLACE: (V.O.) This is Felicia Bryant in an interview we recorded almost two years ago, before the launch of The Aethon.

FELICIA BRYANT: We wanted to know how common mobility functions would be impacted in an interstellar mission. So between the honorific name change at the school, the basic idea for the experiment, and the ease of implementation, it was a natural fit!

ALEX: Honestly, it's an honor to have a school named after me.

AMANDA WALLACE: (V.O.) Said Commander Alex Tawley prior to the Aethon launch at the time of the original report.

ALEX: It's great to have children interested in space. I want them to be involved and this is a valuable experiment they created. I'll take good care of them, I promise!

AMANDA WALLACE: (V.O.) But then came the solar flare on March 21st and the world was brought to a standstill. Even though much of Europe and Asia were spared, almost the totality of the Americas is now without power or substantial lines of communication. This elementary school has been closed but is being used both as a shelter for those who need a place to sleep or a place to take a shower--and as a food distribution center for this community. But following the discovery that The Aethon may have survived the flare, the school has been repurposed as a sign of hope and prayer...

PARENT 1: (AMERICAN) My husband and kid and I, we placed a candle here. We weren't the first, but it seemed appropriate, you know?

PARENT 2: (AMERICAN) Our thoughts and prayers are with the Aethon crew--even with the rest of the world falling apart around us...we may be very far apart--but we're in this together. It would be great if they could come back home...you know? We want to get them home. It would mean a lot for all of us to get through this together...

THE VIDEO FEED BECOMES LIVE AGAIN.

AMANDA WALLACE: (LIVE) Since the time of the pre-recorded interview with Felicia Bryant, Dennis Oldman passed away and Ms. Bryant was appointed the serving Director of Public Relations for NASC. We couldn't change the bottom-third title due to limited editing abilities at the moment.

...But...here at Tawley Elementary, the shows of love and support for the Aethon haven't stopped. You can see behind me, there are hundreds of flowers, candles, and tributes to the Aethon crew. People just want the Aethon to come home. And here at Tawley Elementary--that's more

apparent than ever...Alex, Margaret, Jamal, Wren, Jessa, Taaj,
Eli...you're in our hearts and prayers...

MALE CO-HOST:

...So true. Aethon--we're praying for you. When we come back--how gas rationing will effect the UK and what government officials are going to do about the threat of a potential immigration spike. We'll be right back...

END RECORDING WITH AN ENERGY DISTORTION.

END SCENE.