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Credits

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AUTO ASSEMBLY 2009



Introduction

Is it really 25 years since Transformers burst onto the scene? It's hard to believe that it's been that long. We've had comics published by Marvel, Dreamwave, Panini, IDW, Titan, and it seems like a never-ending stream of publishers, countless TV shows to quench our thirst for new episodes (and to keep the Hasbro marketing men and women happy), and a range of toys that grows so quickly that we just can't keep up with all the new releases (and if we tried, our wives / other halves wouldn't be too happy with us!).

2009 is more than just an Anniversary year though... we've got the second live action movie from Michael Bay. No matter what you think of the films (and I'm not the greatest champion of these), they DO serve to bring in new fans to Transformers and have given the Transformers a new lease of life amongst the mass media and given us "credibility" and a certain "cool factor" again so we don't need to worry when we tell people that we are Transformers fans anymore.

Revenge Of The Fallen has once again had mixed reactions from the fans and the press but there's no denying what impact it has had. It has grossed more than the first film and at the time of writing this, it has made it into the top ten grossing films of all time! Who would have thought that possible a few years ago for a Transformers movie?

As well as 25 years of Transformers, it's the 10th Anniversary of Beast Machines, the much-maligned follow-up to Beast Wars. Certainly a controversial series and one that equally had a love-hate relationship with the fans. When Beast Wars story editors Bob Forward and Larry DiTillio finished the series they felt that there was nothing more to tell story wise, so the continuation of the saga left many unhappy with the new direction it took and the changes introduced. However, as with all new Transformers shows, it has it's fans as well as those who aren't!

To help us celebrate 25 years of Transformers, we are joined this year by an incredible array of guests... Gregg Berger (the voice of Grimlock from G1) and Ian

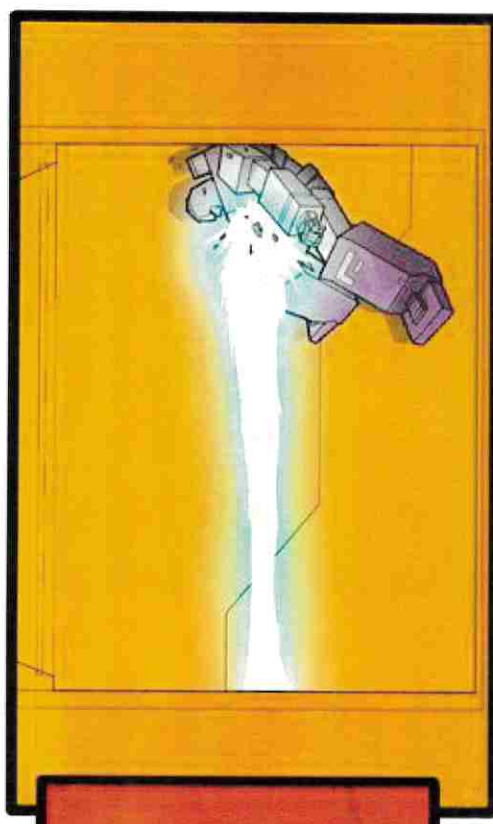
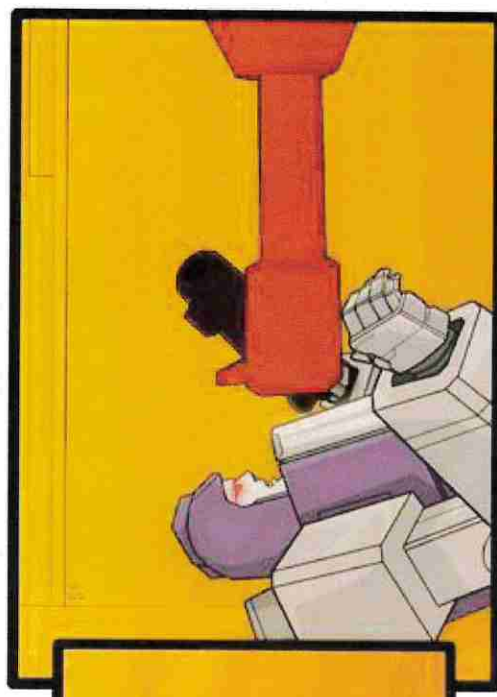
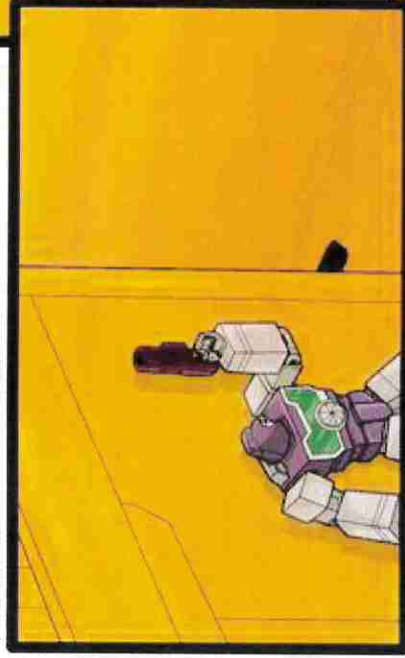
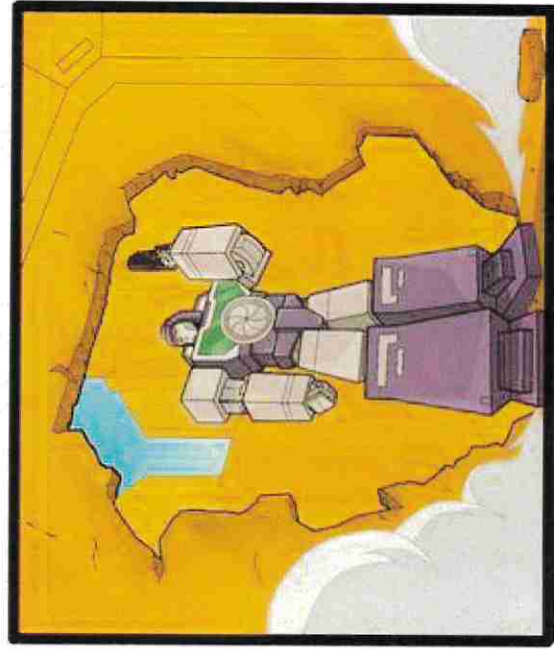
James Corlett (Cheetor from Beast Wars and the aforementioned Beast Machines) are our two guests of honour along with a staggering 13 comic guests making it our biggest guest line-up ever.

That's not all though - over this packed weekend we have more activities than ever... a live band, workshops, video screenings, our first ever officially licensed convention exclusive, both our actors on stage together performing a script written by Simon Furman... we're amazed at how we're fitting it all in this weekend!

I have to be honest and say that running the convention this year has been harder than ever. Behind the scenes things have changed dramatically, and at relatively short notice, just a few months before the convention I had to bring a new team in to help me run the convention and without these guys, Auto Assembly 2009 wouldn't have been possible. They have taken on as much work as they could in the time available and taken all the nonsense I've thrown at them while still keeping a sense of humour and I know that if there is an Auto Assembly 2010 that I have a fantastic team in place. So a big personal thank you to:- Matt Birks, Mark Brady, Billy Edwards, Richard Fieldhouse, Martin Fisher, Dean Holdaway, Andy Turnbull, David Wallace, and Mary Wardle.

Naturally, I can't end without an extra special thank you to my wonderful wife Trish and our daughter Hannah who have both not only put up with me doing everything for Auto Assembly the last few months, barely seeing me at times when I have hidden out of the way for hours on end, but for working their butts off getting things ready for the convention - passes, goodie bags, convention packs... you name it, they did it and I couldn't have done this year without them.

Simon Plumble
Auto Assembly



THE PATH OF WAR DATA FILE 001

WRITER: DAVID WALLACE ARTWORK: SHINOBUENDAR COLORS & LETTERS: PHIL CUTBERTSON

Auto Assembly 2009 Guest Profiles

For this year's convention, we have what is probably our biggest and best guest line-up to-date with guests once again covering all aspects of the Transformers universe including comic and TV guests! Well, it's time to introduce them to you...

Gregg Berger



Gregg Berger

In addition to launching greggberger.com and SoundBitesOnline.com and releasing his autobiographic audio CD, Think Globally... Act VOCALLY (and Voice Virtue), Gregg Berger continues to combine his on camera, stage work, writing and his Convention personal appearances with his consistently busy voice over career. In January of 2001, Animation Magazine named Gregg as one of their "Top Voice Actors of the New Generation."

As an animation voice-over talent, it's been a dog's life for Gregg Berger and that's just the way he likes it. He has been the voice of Odie the dog on Garfield since Odie has had a voice. He also doesn't usually think of himself as a pig, but he sure enjoys playing one on TV. He is the voice of Orson Pig on U.S.

Acres in the Garfield and Friends television series... as well as the voice of Cornfed Pig on Comedy Central's Duckman. Gregg Berger is also the voice of Niles Crane's talking cockatiel 'Baby' on Frasier, The Gromble on Nickelodeon's Ahhh!!! Real Monsters! Eeyore in Kingdom Hearts and many of Disney Character Voices' Winnie The Pooh projects, Kraven the Hunter and Mysterio on Fox's Spiderman, Agent Kay in Men In Black on the Kids' WB, Bill Licking on Angry Beavers, Bud on Channel Umptee-Three and Vic on Julius and Friends. He has helped save the universe as Grimlock on Transformers and as Spirit on G.I. Joe and he has careened through the galaxy as A.B. Sitter on Fantastic Max and has even had a blind date with Judy Jetson as Curly Quasar on The Jetsons (in addition to berating his favorite employee as Mr. Pinkley on Cathy). Of course, he also continues to guest star in various and sundry episodes of a great many other current animated series.

Gregg Berger's Interactive Game credits include work for Ensemble Studios, Lucas Arts, Disney Interactive, Dreamworks Interactive, Electronic Arts, Naughty Dog, Sierra, Westwood and others. Game titles include Halo Wars as Cutter, Spiderman Web of Shadows as Kingpin, Wolverine: X Men Origins as Fred Dukes aka The Blob, Final Fantasy X and X-2 as Sir Jecht, Star Wars: Episode One Racer and Star Wars: Phantom Menace, Kingdom Hearts as Eeyore, Winnie the Pooh/Eeyore Interactives, Curse of Monkey Island, Small Soldiers, Baldaur's Gate, Gabriel Knight, Ground Control, Red Alert, Wacky Racers, Tarzan, Ahhh!!! Real Monsters, and more.

His voice can also regularly be found on radio and television commercials, network promos and feature film trailers.

Gregg Berger's on camera feature film roles include in addition to his cameo in Dreamgirls as the Chicago DJ, Porchlight Pictures' Mr. Chips (as the 'mysterious' Mr. Toller), Warner Brothers' Police Academy: Mission To Moscow (as Lt. Yuri Talinsky), Touchstone Pictures' Spaced Invaders (as Steve W. Klembecker), HBO Films' Running Mates, (starring Ed Harris and Diane Keaton), as

well as the animated feature films Rover Dangerfield, The Rugrats Movie, Recess: School's Out, and Fly Me To The Moon

Berger's television credits include starring roles in three pilots for CBS, a recurring role in St. Elsewhere and numerous guest starring roles in episodic series, including Becker, The Drew Carey Show, The Amanda Show, Wings, L.A. Law, Quantum Leap, Night Court, Perfect Strangers and Bob.

On stage, Gregg Berger has appeared in both the New York and Los Angeles productions of the controversial Loose Lips, directed by Martin Charnin, the Los Angeles Company of Cloud Nine, the La Jolla Playhouse production of Figaro Gets A Divorce, directed by Robert Woodruff and he was directed by the late John Cassavetes in the world premiere of The Third Day Comes. He was a performing member of the improvisational comedy group The Groundlings and also appeared with the Deaf West Theatre Company in their highly praised signed and spoken production of One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest.

Gregg also volunteers his time and talents to Los Angeles based Famous Fone Friends, making calls to kids in Pediatric Hospitals all across the country.

Gregg and his family live in a ranch community just outside of Los Angeles where they enjoy their three cats, their rabbit, their bird, their neighbors' horses and the cool afternoon breezes.

What does Gregg Berger enjoy doing most? Simple... "all of it".

Ian James Corlett

For over a quarter of a century Ian James Corlett has been serving up unique voice characterizations for animation projects of every genre. His beginnings were voicing radio and TV commercials and soon found himself cast in cartoon features and series such as the EMMY-nominated cuteness of "Dragon Tales", "Care Bears and the zany "Johnny Test" to the preschool fun of "Dinosaur Train".



But voices aren't the only talent Ian exercises in the field of animation. Ian's keen sense of comedy as well as his strong feel for character and story structure have combined to make him one of the busiest animation-specific writers in Canada. His work can be seen in such diverse series as "The Adventures of Paddington Bear", "Rescue Heroes", and the EMMY-winning "Rolie Polie Olie". Ian was the recipient of the GEMINI award for "best writing in a children's series" for his work on "Rolie Polie Olie."

Besides working as an episodic writer for clients like The Walt Disney Co., Nelvana, FOX Kids and, Ian has created several hit series' including his namesake, "BEING IAN" an animated series which began airing in 2005. In short order BEING IAN became the network's #1 rated Canadian program.

In 2009, Ian turned his focus to writing his first book for parents and kids called "E is for Ethics". Designed as a fun way for parents to open up discussions with their kids about basic human values, the book will appeal to families everywhere.

Based in Vancouver, BC, Ian spends his non-writing time following professional motorsport, and racing his own cars. The vast majority of his time and focus though is spent in pursuing family activities with his wife of 26 years, twelve year old son and his ten year old daughter.

Jason Cardy



Jason is a professional in the comic book industry, recently making the jump from colourist to artist. His drawn artwork has recently been seen on the occasional cover of the 'Transformers Universe' comic (from Titan), 'Terminator Salvation', 'Actionman ATOM' and Udon Comics new 'Darkstalkers' artbook.

Primarily a colourist, he has worked on several TF-related projects including the UK TF Comic, G1 Standees, DVD art & Death's Head / Dragon's Claws trade paperbacks. He has worked on over 20 titles including several award winning books such as 'Spectacular Spiderman' and 'Frankenstein'.

Aside from Transformers, Jason is currently working with Kat Nicholson in producing all the artwork for Shakespeare's 'A MidSummer Night's Dream' for Classical Comics. He is also writing his own sci-fi comic strip that he plans to draw, colour and pitch to publishers next year, featuring (you guessed it) transforming robots!

Find a selection of his work online at jasoncardy.deviantart.com

Kat Nicholson



Kat Nicholson is a comic artist who has worked primarily as a colorist to date. In the Transformers world she's perhaps best known for her bold and eye-catching colours that she's added to covers and strips of Titan's tragically short-lived TFA Magazine. She also coloured Beast Wars illustrations for IDW and has contributed artwork for a couple of Auto-Assembly shows.

Other than Transformers Kat loves to work on any product that's cartoony or fantastical, other title's she's coloured on include Spiderman, DreamWorks Tales, Action Man A.T.O.M, and she's currently drawing a graphic novel of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" with her partner in crime, Jason Cardy.

Jon Davis-Hunt

Jon trained as a fine artist and graphic designer at Isle College of Art. After that he studied at De Montfort University in Leicester, where he decided that playing computer games and reading comics was much more fun than attending lectures - an opinion that

sadly few of his lecturers shared.

After leaving University he travelled the globe, before the real-world finally caught up with him and forced him to get a proper job.

For the best part of a decade Jon worked as a concept artist and designer within the computer games industry overseeing the development and design of several successful game franchises. Eventually the pull of the comic world became too strong, so he quit his job and entered the wonderful world of comics!

He currently lives with his beautiful wife Helen, in a cottage in the Warwickshire countryside.

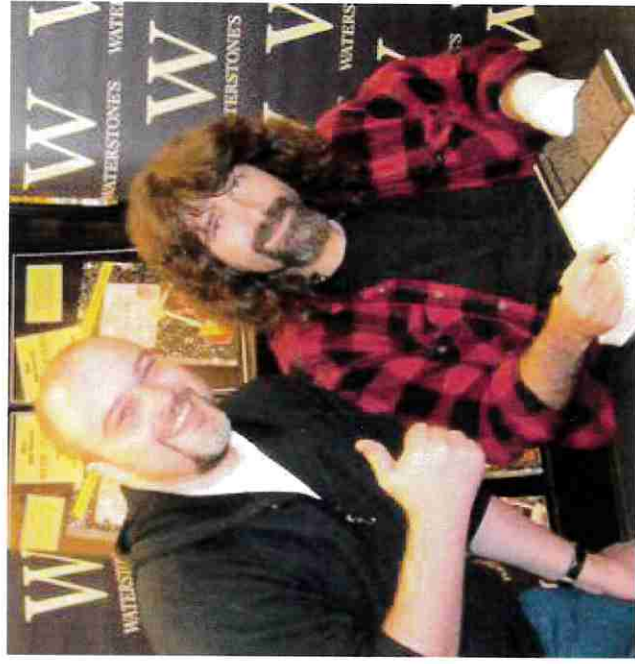
Lee Bradley

Lee Bradley is a penciller / inker / colourist and sometime writer, as well as being a long term Transformers fan. Lee broke into the comics industry in 2007. Working as colourist on John Mccrea's full run of Spider-Man Tower of Power, Lee moved forward into becoming a penciller and inker on this self same title. He began his relationship with Titan inking and colouring on their Turtles fast forward comic and moved on to creating the How to Draw Transformers Guide for them.

As well as working on strips in the main Transformers comic he also worked on their Transformers Animated short lived comic book. Now working for Teshkeel on the monthly comic book The '99 alongside long term collaborator John Mccrea.

Simon Williams

Simon Williams is not only a professional comic artist hailing from Wales, in the United Kingdom... but is also Wales ever lovin' idol of millions. Since breaking into the comics business in 2003, Simon has worked on various UK comic titles... including *Transformers Armada*, *Spectacular Spider-man Adventures*, and the *Incredible Hulk Annual*. He has also recently produced artwork for Panini Comics' recent *Death's Head* collections, IDW's *Transformers: Beast Wars sourcebooks* and Titan's *Transformers UK magazine*.



He has also produced artwork for various other forms of Transformers-related media, such as DVDs, toys and collectable merchandise... including the official Optimus Prime and Megatron standees for CardboardCutout.net. He is currently working on Clearvision's new line of Marvel Comics DVDs.

Once he achieves his plan of world domination, he plans to tell all in his autobiography, *From Idle... To Idol...*

Lee Sullivan

Lee Sullivan trained as a wildlife and technical illustrator at Barnfield College, then spent five years as a graphic artist for British Aerospace in Stevenage, England.

He freelanced for a further five years, providing art for the advertising and magazine publishing industries; then in 1988 he was introduced to the comics world by artist John Higgins. Since then, titles he has worked on include:

Transformers, Thundercats, Deathhead, Doctor Who Magazine (from 1989 onwards), RoboCop (US), Wildcards, William Shatner's TekWorld (US), 2000AD (Judge Dredd; Mercy Heights; Blacklight; Futureshocks; Vector 13, Megazine), Radio Times Doctor Who strip, Marvel UK reprint covers, Action

Man, Transformers Armada (UK) and Thunderbirds Magazine (currently).

He regularly produces work for educational and magazine publications and has supplied storyboard art for the BBC and development designs for animation companies.



Some of his most recent work is BBC Cult's successful series of online Doctor Who webcasts: 'Death Comes to Time'; 'Real Time'; and 'Shada' which was written by the late Douglas Adams. He also returned to the world of Transforming by contributing pencil art to the Atari PS2 game mini-comic; this time working for the mighty Wildfur corporation.

In what he laughingly refers to as his 'spare time', Lee continues to frighten his wife, cat and neighbours with an increasingly noisy saxophone fetish and performs regularly with the Roxy Music tribute band, Roxy Magic.

Liam Shalloo



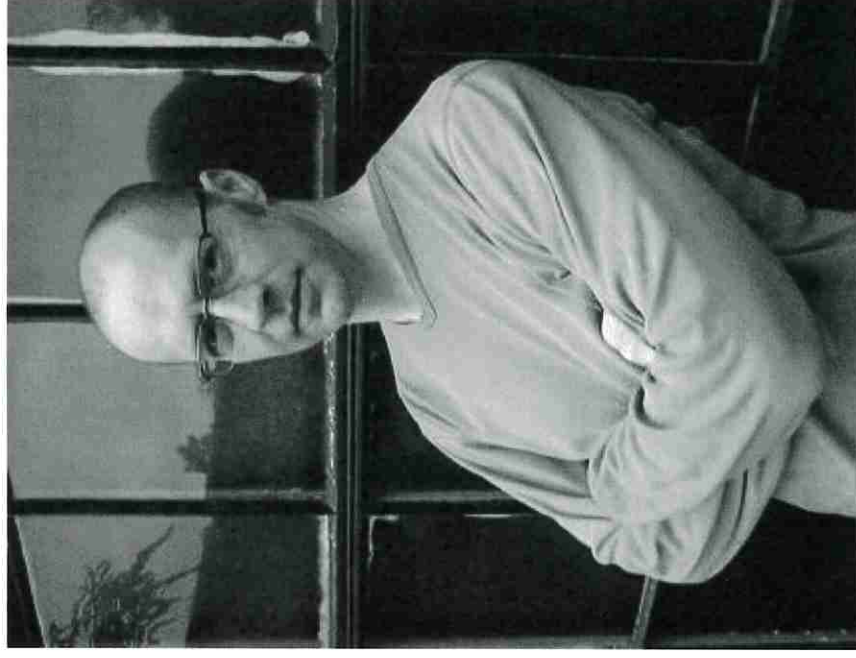
A life long comic fan, Liam first discovered digital colouring and painting whilst studying for a degree in Digital Animation and Digital Arts. Just prior to his graduating he was offered his first professional work with IDW on Spotlight Hot Rod. Since then he has gone on to work on numerous Transformers books for both Titan and IDW, including Revelation, Devastation, The Beast Wars Source book, Saga of the Allspark, Transformers Animated: The Arrival, Spotlight Grimlock, Blaster, Mirage and has worked on a large bulk of The Best of the UK Reprint covers. Apart from Transformers he has also worked on Snaked, GI Joe and Dr Who. Currently Liam resides in London and works as member of the Singstar team for Sony Computer Entertainment.

Narf!

Andrew Wildman

Andrew Wildman is a designer/illustrator of some 25 years industry experience. His work as an illustrator has been used in advertising and publishing but it is for his work in the field

of comics that he is best known. Illustrating for books such as **Transformers**, **The X-Men**, **Spider-Man** and **Venom** with such acclaimed writers as **Larry Hama**, **Peter David** and **Ralph Macchio** has gained him a devoted fan base. Further work includes character design and animated movie production for the TV and Video Games industries. Storyboarding for the film **Wing Commander** and design and concept work on games **The Mummy**, **Gunlok**, **Jesse James: Gunfighter**, **Delta Force**, **Largo Winch** and **Dredd v Death** have created a presence within the computer games industry.



More recently, Wildman returned to the comics world of Transformers with the Dreamwave and IDW published Graphic Novel **The War Within – The Dark Ages**, with long-time collaborator Simon Furman and **Black Horizons** with writer **Tim Seeley** published by **Devil's Due**. Andrew was also Head Character Designer at BKN where he created characters for the animated TV show Legend Of The Dragon along with **Ali Baba**, **Kong: Return to the Jungle** and **Zorro: Generation Z**.

Andrew is currently developing a Graphic Novel with **Bulldog Empire** creator/writer,

Jason Cobby as well as the comic strip **FRONTIER** for British comic **The DFC** as well as a ground breaking Children's TV series with Bob the Builder scriptwriter, **Simon Jowett**.

Other work includes character and environment design for the Games Development studio, **ZoeMode Guildford**. In 2005 Andrew founded the charity project, **Draw the World Together**. The purpose of the project is to raise funds to enable education possibilities for street children around the world.

Lew Stringer

Lew made his comic debut in 1983 and has been a fulltime freelance artist and writer since 1984. In that time he has worked for countless publishers including IPC, Marvel Comics, Egmont, Panini, and D.C. Thomson, covering the comics field from originated characters to licensed properties.

He has produced strips for numerous publications including **Viz**; **Beano Summer Special**; **Buster**; **Oink!**; **Fun-Size Dandy**; **Fun-Size Beano**; **Sonic The Comic**; **White Dwarf**; **Ghostbusters**; **Transformers**, and national newspapers **DAILY STAR** and **SUNDAY SPORT**. Lew has also written articles on the history of comics for publications such as **2000 AD**, **The Comics Journal**, and the **BBC** website.

Many of his characters have enjoyed long and popular runs, including ten years for "Tom Thug" in **Buster** and four years for "Combat Colin" in **Marvel's Transformers** comic. He was also a regular writer on **Sonic The Comic** for seven years.

The past two decades have seen major changes to the UK comics market, but Lew has always adapted to maintain regular work in the industry. Having worked for publications for all age groups, his work has appeared in such diverse titles as **CITV Tellytots** and **Lego Adventures** for the nursery market, to **Viz** and **Sweet FA** for the adult reader.

In recent years he has expanded his work

overseas as well as the UK. Since 1997 he has written and drawn *The Suburban Satanists* for Egmont where it appears in the Swedish and Norwegian editions of *Herman Hedning* comic. 2005 saw the publication of *Brickman Begins* for the Los Angeles based publisher Active Images and since 2006 he has been creating a regular *Brickman* strip for the monthly *Elephantmen* comic published in the USA by Image Comics.

Some of Lew's current work includes: Team *Toxic* in *Toxic* fortnightly magazine Mini *Marvels* for *Spectacular Spider Man* *Brickman* in *Elephantmen* for Image Comics Artwork on a new series for *The Beano* Various strips occasionally for *VIZ* comic, including *Felix* and *His Amazing Underpants* and *Suicidal Syd*

Kris Carter



Theorising one could get a design job after art college, Kris Carter stepped out of his graduation and vanished. He awoke to find himself trapped in a secured loan call centre, facing irate customers over a red hot phone, and driven by some unknown force to change his career for the better - by colouring comic books. And so Kris finds himself freelancing

from job to job, striving to put colours on what's been drawn, and hoping each time that his next job, will be the job that allows him to quit working in that call centre. Based in Wales, Kris has coloured several *Transformers* comics for Titan and IDW, including *Spotlights: Arcee*, *Cyclonus* and *Hardhead*, the *Revenge Of The Fallen* movie comic, and the upcoming *All Hail Megatron* #15.

Mike Collins



Mike Collins is a writer/artist/storyboarder for comics, animation and film. He's worked in the business for 20 years now, drawing pretty much every major US and UK character- X-Men, Judge Dredd, Spider-Man, Batman, Superman...

However, his first regular assignment was drawing the *Marvel UK Transformers* strip, and the *Ladybird* series of *Transformers* books. Big robots are rarely far from his work tho, and just this month, in his current gig as *Doctor Who Magazine* artist he's had the 10th *Doctor* face off against a Roman gladiator version of *Optimus Prime*!

Staz Johnson

Stewart "Staz" Johnson made his professional debut working on role playing game magazines later moving on to working for *Marvel UK* where he worked on some of

their more popular titles at the time - *Action Force* and *Transformers* during it's later issues. It was in this time that Staz had his first work appear *Stateside* in the *Marvel's GI Joe* title in 1989 - a reprint from *Action Force*.

He has subsequently worked on 2000AD and his links with *Marvel* continued in 1994 when he started to work for *Marvel US* on titles such as *Thor* and *Spiderman*.

Following that, he then "switched sides" working for *DC Comics* on some of their major titles including *Detective Comics*, *Catwoman*, *Robin*, *Batman/Aliens II* and more.

He is continually working in the comics industry as his website highlights and last returned to *Transformers* pencilling an issue for *Titan Comics*.

Nick Roche



Like some sort of cut-price *Triplechanger*, Wexford-born Nick Roche changes from artist, to writer, to vaguely humanoid, and back again. (His instructions are hard to

decipher, however.) A hardcore robo-fanboy, Nick really landed on his feet when he started work with IDW, churning out covers and kicking off their *Spotlight* series. Since then, he's worked with Titan Publishing on their *Transformers* and *TMNT* titles, as well as handling some *Doctor Who* for IDW. He wrote the Zombot-tastic *Spotlight: Kup*, handled art on the currently-available-as-trade paperback *Maximum Dinobots*, and has also written and drawn a strip for the upcoming *All Hail Megatron* #15, again featuring ol' Kup. 2010 looks to be Nick's year as he writes and draws the 5-issue miniseries *The Last Stand Of The Wreckers*. In his spare time, Nick likes to hassle his beautiful girlfriend Anne-Marie via the gift of hair metal.

Go Go Grimzilla By Michael O'Sullivan

There are a few cold hard facts about life. Dinosaurs are cool. Tyrannosaurus rex is cool. Robots are cool. Therefore, a combination of all three must by default contain more awesomeness than can be comprehended by mere humans. And the only way to make that better is if said combo was voiced by a fantastic voice actor like Gregg Berger. Who'd have thought Transformers would give us such a merger.

Grimlock, the Dinobot commander, sometimes Autobot leader and walking natural disaster has been one of the most prominent characters in Transformers since 1984. Grimlock not only managed to survive the Great Cull of '86, he would go on to become one of the most important characters in the Marvel era under Master Transformers Scribe, Simon Furman. Grimlock's popularity would ensure he was one of the few *Generation One* characters to get a figure in the *Beast Wars* line, albeit as a redeco rather than a new mould. In the 2000s, Grimlock was a major player in the majority of the Dreamwave era, most notably the *War Within* series. He would appear in several minor comics, such as the *Universe* series, the Comic Bon Bon *Classics* manga and the Devil's Due G.I Joe crossover and making his IDW debut in *Spotlight: Shockwave*, eventually earning a spot as the main character in the *Maximum Dinobots* mini-series. Grimlock's popularity lead to him appearing in *Transformers: Animated*, voiced by David Kaye, where he was one of the most regularly featured guest stars in the show.

25 years after his first appearance, Grimlock's unique personality, abilities and legendary speech impediment have ensured that he remains one of the most recognisable characters in the franchise. Will we ever see a version of the Big G in the live action franchise? Who knows? But in honour of the vocal talents of Mr. Gregg Berger, who brought my favourite character to life, here's a look at the various appearances of the biggest badass in Transformers over the last quarter of a century.

The Generation 1 Cartoon

Season 1

Grimlock's career started as it would go on, violently. The first Dinobots, created in *S.O.S Dinobots* because Prime forgot giving into Wheeljack's whims is always a bad idea, were mindless violent animals, who demolished the entire Autobot army. Then, they got brain upgrades and decided to demolish the entire Decepticon army. Good times were had by all. It wasn't until their next appearance, *War of the Dinobots* (notable for featuring Swoop and Snarl) that Grimlock would take centre stage. He was blood thirsty, arrogant and wholly convinced that he should be in charge, meaning it didn't take much for Megatron to convince him to nearly kill Optimus. Fortunately for all and sundry, Grimlock saw the error of his ways and apologised for thinking himself better than his comrades. It was a major change... which lasted right up until the next time they needed a favour from his team.

In *The Ultimate Doom*, Grimlock has what must be one of his more memorable moments, when he refused to help save Earth until Wheeljack pointed out that if the Earth exploded with him on it, he probably would come off the worse. Grims still didn't seem too enthusiastic about the whole thing though. Grimlock's final appearance in season one would be in *Heavy Metal War*, which featured a battle that has stuck in people's minds ever since - The Dinobots vs The Constructicons. For Grimlock it started well, with his team pretty much walking all over the 'Cons. Things became a little more even when Devastator entered the arena though. Eventually, with some help from Hound and Prime, the Dinobots defeated their foes, cementing for many the idea of a rivalry between the first combiner team and the most powerful non-combiner subgroup.

Season 2

"Me Grimlock here again, Optimus Prime, to pull your diodes out of laser fire."
While certainly the most prominent Dinobot in season one, it wasn't until Transformers

much longer second run that Grimlock decided we needed to know how great he was. Things started subtly in *Atlantis Arise*, very subtly in fact, considering Bumblebee was able to block both Grimlock and Swoop during a game of football. The rest of the episode however, featured Grimlock quite heavily. Summoned to save the Autobots from Megatron and his new Atlantean allies, Grimlock spent all his time either fighting or having a go at anyone in sight. Megatron and Prime were both on the receiving end, with Megatron having to fight the big lug to boot. It finished up with the Dinobots destroying Atlantis, and Grimlock making Prime look bad by saving him again. It was the best day ever.

Day of the Machines featured more of the same, although Grimlock and co had a rather brief appearance and they only got to fight possessed military vehicles. What followed was the first of two Dinobot centred multiparters. In *Dinobot Island*, the Dinos finally find somewhere they can play without breaking anything valuable; an island lost in time and populated by dinosaurs. The Decepticons show up of course and the Dinobots have to stop them. This episode featured the first solid defeat for the team, albeit a rather round about one. But they team up with their organic brethren to get their own back in Part II. All this and Blaster too. *Desertion of the Dinobots* would feature the Dinobots getting badly injured in an explosion and Grimlock promptly deciding they were going to quit and head for Cybertron. Bad timing on their part, as the Autobots were beginning to malfunction from a want of Cybertronium. Either that or a lack of fibre in the diet. This two parter was fairly unique as the focus was taken off of Grimlock and put on the nice guy of the team, Swoop. However, Grimlock would have the last laugh, deciding to work with the Autobots from now on...until the next time he couldn't be bothered.

Transformers: The Movie

The Dinobots were some of the most prominent S1/2 characters in the film. Grimlock was very much in the limelight at this stage, as was his more comic tendencies. The whole team was comedy

relief, but Grimlock had a number of stand-alone comic moments, like Blurr trying to force him onto a ship or his first meeting with the dev-I mean Wheelie. In between the hilarity, he also fought Devastator (well tried to, Slag did most of the work), blew up a sweep, became governor to everyone on Quintessa... because he killed everyone who looked at him sideways and kicked Unicron in the buttocks. All the while, he only appeared in robot mode twice. It was the start of a disturbing trend.

Season 3

The team never really showed up in season 3. Grimlock on the other hand was everywhere. He was easily the most prominent character from the pre-movie era. Unfortunately his personality had done a complete 180, going from a killing machine that's a bit slow in the head to a stupid, almost cuddly comic relief character. While he featured prominently in episodes like *Madman's Paradise*, where he partnered with Daniel as they travel to a medieval dimension, and *Grimlock's New Brain* where an electric shock made him a genius until he built the Technobots and downloading his intelligence into Computron, his main role was to tag along with the main characters and be goofy. Oi. Grimlock was redeemed somewhat in the episode *Call of the Primitives*, which is widely regarded as the best looking Transformers episode of the age. He not only gets into a couple of fights, he also survives having Trypicon fall on him and gets to save the entire universe with the flip of a switch. This doesn't make season 3 any more bearable for a Grimlock fan but at least he one upped that damn fish monkey.

Marvel Comics

Marvel US: The Budiansky Era

Grimlock and the Dinobots first appeared in issue #8 as Transformers of standard (in Grimlock's case, well above average) intelligence. They had arrived prior to Optimus and Megatron, alongside established badass Shockwave. Shockwave beat the tar out of them...right before they all got stuck in tar. Freed in the then present

day, they went up against Megatron, who also beat them up. Such was the early days of Marvel for the Dinobots. They promptly disappeared from the US title (although they went on to have a large role in the UK original material) until issue #19, where displeased by Prime's plan to set Omega Supreme on Devastator, Grimlock led them away to mope in the mountains for the next 8 issues.

Grimlock's role in Budiansky's story got a major boost in issue #27, where he planned to use Optimus' death as a way of taking over. Then Trypicon showed up. Hilarity ensued, involving a palaeontologist and Grimlock and co holding Trypicon off until Ratbat's cheapskate attitude forced Trypicon to retreat. The Autobots were so impressed by this that they made him leader. Huh. Grimlock's first move was to get himself a crown...oh dear. The new boss quickly established a kill or be kill approach to the war, even abandoning Earth to the Decepticons. Eventually, some of the Autobots grew dissatisfied with his management style, so Blaster and Goldbug deserted. Grimlock was so insulted by this he spent most of the Autobot resources hunting the pair down, eventually threatening some lost human children to lure Blaster into the open. He then strapped Blaster to a torture machine as punishment. Damn.

Things finally went down the tube when the Headmasters arrived. Grimlock, disgusted by the idea of bonding with a human, challenged Fortress Maximus to battle. Fort Max, badly damaged from an earlier conflict, was forced to allow Blaster to fight in his stead. Blaster was doing quite well for himself, and even managed to convince Grimlock he had been abandoned what it really meant to be an Autobot. Fortunately, they sorted things out right as Ratbat's Decepticons attacked and the pair turned the tide against the flying rat. This was Grimlock's last official act as leader. In issue #47, Optimus was back in charge and Grimlock was functioning as a sub-commander.

Remember how Grimlock survived the Great Cull of '86? Well the '89 one got him. As Marvel cleared the series of characters that were no longer on the shelves, the Dinobots

became victims of Underbase Starscream, alongside everyone else who wasn't a master of some kind. Grimlock did manage to get one of the only decent hits against Screamer though, so at least there's that. And thus ends the story of Marvel Comics Grimlock. He lived a warrior and died a hero... then Furman came along.

Marvel UK and the Furman era

While Budiansky was working his magic in the US, Simon Furman, writer of the extra UK stories, had taken a shine to the Big G and began to use him extensively. His first big moment was a battle with the human robot Guardian, beginning in *Decepticon Dam-Busters*. In their first punch up, the Dinobots took a beating, especially Swoop. Seeking revenge, the other four tried again, this time scoring a victory. Unfortunately, said victory would cause the robot to blow them all to kingdom come. As Grimlock readied to kill Guardian, and by extension everyone in the immediate vicinity, Ratchet used the headless body of Prime to stop him, which kinda resulted in Grimlock's arm coming off. Ratchet fixed it though, and in thanks Grimlock socked him. Swoop had sacrificed himself to save them from Guardian's bomb, and the Dinobots, for reasons that were never fully explained, abandoned the Autobots.

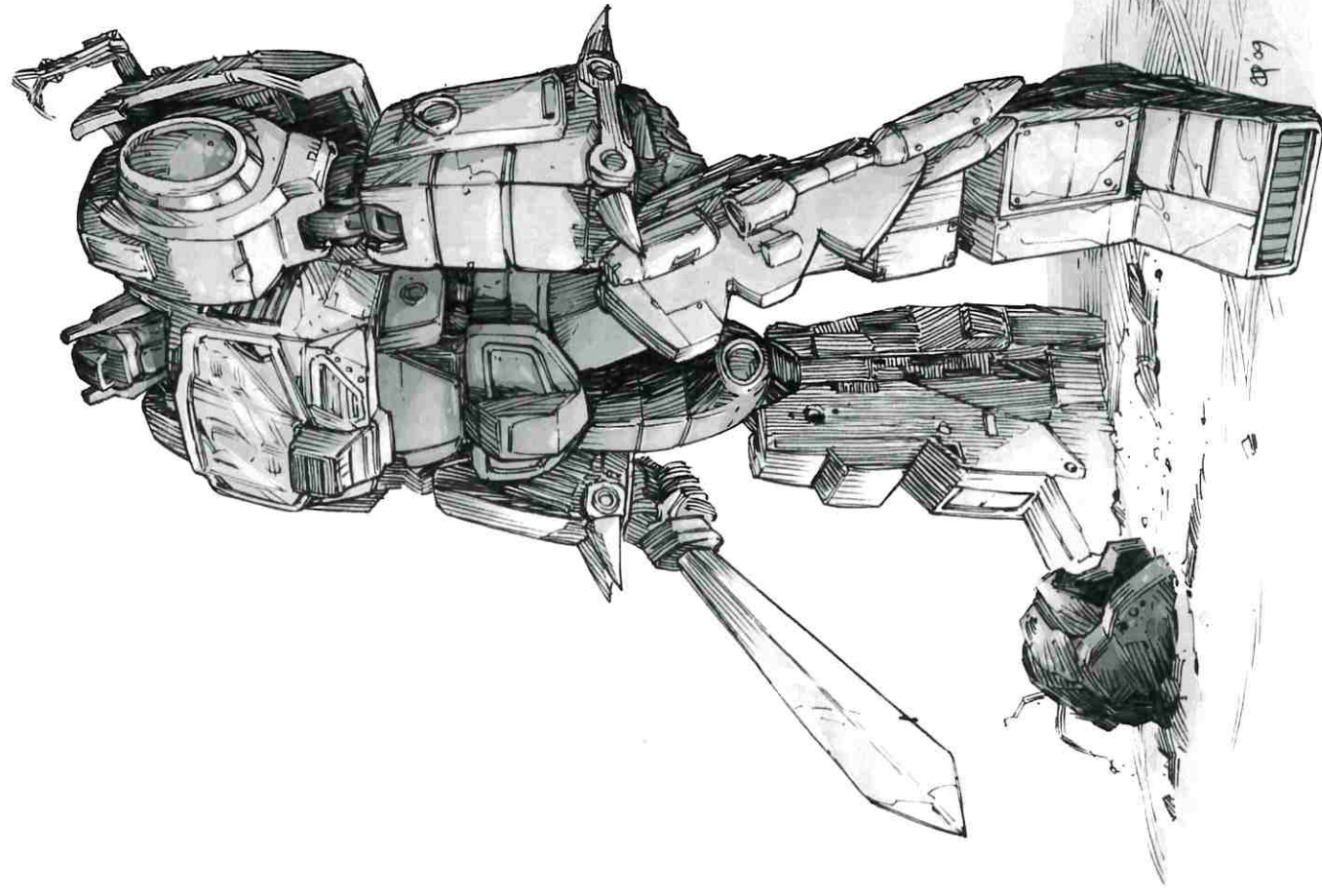
Swoop's return in the *Icarus Theory*, suffering from both mind control and mental decay, led into the *Dinobot Hunt*, a storyline focusing on both factions trying to capture the other four mindless Dinobots, culminating in a battle between Grimlock and Sludge. Both combatants entered a stasis and would spend the next few months fighting a mental battle to return to the waking world, returning in issue #19 of the US comic. Later, they encountered the journalist Joy Meadows in the storyline *In The National Interest*, where Grimlock made fun of Sludge's crush and got in a fight with Megatron and the Constructicons. They followed this with a quick but brutal encounter with Galvatron in *Fallen Angel*, where Grimlock was beaten half to death, only to be saved by Blaster... which might explain the whole torture thing.

During his reign as Autobot Head Honcho, Grimlock ended up battling the Predacons in *Grudge Match*, a storyline which revolved around Swoop's secret past and firmly established the extremely tight knit relationship the Dinobots shared.

Grimlock played a fairly large role in *Time Wars*, where he first attacked the future Autobots, then attacked the future Decepticons. It was a hectic few days. Grimlock's UK only adventures would be relegated to alternate histories from this point on, both in leading the Earthforce team through a rather large continuity error, and a brief appearance in the alternate future storylines focusing on Rodimus Prime. In the mainstream comic, Furman had taken over as writer, and wasted no time in reviving his signature character. In issue #58, Ratchet sneakily revived Grimlock, Jazz and Bumblebee as Pretenders. The first thing Grimlock did was pick a fight with Megatron. Although the Autobot pretenders defeated the Decepticons, Ratchet and Megatron ended up being sucked into a spacial rift. Grimlock, now without his Dinobots, formed a team with Jazz and Bumblebee, raiding the Decepticons and being generally badass, until issue #60, where they stumbled upon Primus' resting place. Unfortunately

the Mayhem Attack Squad had followed them. The Autobots emerged victorious, but a shot from Octopunch ricocheted off Grimlock's impenetrable back (no one ever mentions that in the tech specs) and hit Primus, waking him and alerting Unicron to his presence.

Things pretty much went downhill from there. Sent on the Matrix Quest, Grimlock's team returned in issue #65, having tracked the Matrix to a human lab situated on a distant moon. It was here that it became apparent Grimlock was suffering a severe case of



survivors guilt, seeming to blame himself for being alive while the Dinobots remained offline. This wasn't helped by Thunderwing's arrival and the subsequent defeat Grimlock had to endure.

Things came to a head in issue #69, when a guilt ridden Grimlock stole the Dinobots bodies and headed for the planet Hydrus Four to track down a legendary energy source called Nucleon. Unfortunately it was both well guarded and possibly deadly. After fighting through the guardians, Grimlock tested the nucleon on himself. It filled him with power and he immediately infused the Dinobots with it. Brought back online, they made for the Ark in order to revive the fallen Autobots (and one Decepticon) it held. All was wonderful, bar the whole planet eating death god thing, except for the fact Grimlock was beginning to experience spasms across his body.

Following Prime's death, Grimlock was once again put in command of the Autobots, and apart from butting heads with Prowl, he was doing well. It couldn't last and Grimlock was soon landed with two big problems. Hi-Q had latched onto the Dinobots, claiming he was really Optimus Prime, and Grimlock's spasms were growing progressively more serious, leading to his whole body locking up during a battle with Cybertronian mutants in issue #76. Hi-Q revealed that the Nucleon was changing Grimlock and the spasms were part of the process. The Powermaster sped up the process and Grimlock took on a new, more powerful form and promptly beat the crap out of the mutants. But with great power comes great drawbacks. Grimlock had sacrificed his ability to transform.

In issue #77, the Autobots and Decepticons were trying to establish a peace, while setting up an evacuation of a seemingly dying Cybertron. Grimlock's low opinion of the situation was made clear when he bounced a cup of oil off Fangry's head. Fangry then tried to kill Grimlock. It ended poorly for the wolf-bat-lizard thing. It also gave Bludgeon, the new Decepticon boss, the excuse to abandon the peace, stealing a ship and heading for Klo. Grimlock, using a shuttle he'd stored away years ago, lead the Autobots after

them...and promptly got them all killed. Fortunately, a reborn Prime and the Last Autobot arrived, resurrected the Autobots, kicked 'Con butt and lead them to an apparently not dying Cybertron. And so ended the second reign of Grimlock.

Generation 2

Continuing where G1 had left off, G2 saw Grimlock put in charge of an Autobot strike force, tracking whoever was transforming planets into "little Cybertrons". This led the Autobots to meet with, and be captured by, Jhiaxus. Prime despaired, but Grimlock rallied the troops and they escaped. Rallying aside, Grimlock was still very much a free spirit. In issue #4, Grimlock went against orders and led a raid on some of Jhiaxus' troops. This resulted in the deaths of Red Alert and Mirage. It also forced Grimlock to admit that all his jealousy and resentment was because what he really wanted wasn't the leadership, but the loyalty Optimus inspired in others. This confession led Prime, to Grimlock's, the Autobots' and the reader's surprise, to promote Grimlock to second in command.

Grimlock's next big moment came in issue #6 when Megatron showed up, and Grimlock knocked him through several walls. He was stopped from killing the already damaged 'con by Prime and Prowl, as they wanted to form an alliance. Big G did not take this well. And he didn't like the fact Megatron wanted a muzzle put on him (kinky).

Jhiaxus and co became a lower priority with the arrival of The Swarm, a living dust storm that devoured living beings. Grimlock led a joint Autobot/Decepticon team, earning the loyalty of some of the younger 'cons and raising the ire of fellow veteran Razorclaw. Grimlock survived the last stand against The Swarm, and lived to fight another day.

Minor Marvel Post-G1 Stories

Grimlock also appeared in a number of post-Generation One stories, which don't blend into the same continuity. In *Another Time and Place*, Autobots were gradually becoming Actionmasters and blaming Grimlock. Feeling

guilty, he went to find a way to restore their ability to transform. In *Alignment*, Grimlock ended up encountering The Liege Maximo, and sacrificed himself in the process. The recent *Timelines: Classics* stories were set in an alternate Marvel continuity, and featured Grimlock in a fairly minor role.

Dreamwave Comics

In 2001, Dreamwave acquired the Transformers licence, and started a new Generation One comic. And of course, Grimlock appeared in the first volume, *Prime Directive*, written by Chris Saracini. Chris didn't want a return to form though, and decided to mix things up. Half way through the series, Grimlock appeared, seemingly disillusioned with both the humans and the Autobots, wearing the Decepticon badge. In a way it was a shocker, and in another not that strange, when you consider how heroic and decent and whatever most Autobots are, and how violent and aggressive Grimlock was. He played only a small role in the story, abandoned under half a building at the end by Megatron. Optimus offered him a second chance, but according to Grimlock, things had changed too much. He shook off the rubble and walked away, taking a little of Optimus' hope with him.

Brad Mick (James McDonough's pen-name) came on board for the second volume, entitled *War and Peace*, a story revolving around Shockwave and his reshaping of Cybertron. In the story (apparently contradicting what Saracini had hoped to work on), it came to light that Megatron had captured the other four Dinobots and used them as leverage to force Grimlock to change sides. As Shockwave took Megatron back to Cybertron, leaving Ultra Magnus to capture Prime's team (long story), Grimlock returned to the fold, saving Optimus from Blitzwing, hunting down his fellow dinos, stealing a shuttle and launching for Cybertron. Unfortunately, the shuttle was rubbish and they ended up crashing. Stealing Octane's ride, and his head, the Dinobots laid waste to the Shockwave controlled lacon. As the others battled an Omega Sentinel, Grimlock met up with Shockwave and Blitzwing, and beat the life out of them. He was stopped

from killing them by Ultra Magnus shooting him in the face... for his own good. Ultra Magnus ordered him repaired, and he went to put things right by aiding Optimus (again, long story). When the fighting broke out, Grimlock saved Hot Rod from a triple changer...who may have been blitzing things. As a sentinel arrived, said triple changer was used as a projectile. Grimlock abandoned the battle to track Optimus and Magnus down, finding them hanging over a pit at the planet's core (long...you get the picture). Saving the pair from certain death, Grimlock made some wise cracks and led them to safety, whining all the way.

Grimlock's next appearance would be in flashback form during *War Within*, a series that went back to the early days of the war, written by Simon Furman. Grimlock was one of the most important characters in this series. A former Decepticon, now an important field commander, Grimlock was none too impressed with his new boss, Optimus Prime. Prime regarded the fight for Cybertron as a waste of precious life and ordered a mass evacuation, while Grimlock considered such a move an insult to the lives already lost. As the story progressed, Grimlock decided he would either convince Optimus of what he saw as the truth, or he'd take him down. It came to a head when Optimus, after an out of body experience that showed both faction leaders their future in the war, was unsure as to whether or not to take his first battle with Megatron to a lethal conclusion. Grimlock saw this as Optimus abandoning his responsibility and called him out. Optimus took Grimlock's sword and although he let Megatron live, he destroyed his memories of the future. The series ended with Grimlock and Optimus having a heart to heart, and both committing to the fight.

The follow up to this series, *The Dark Ages*, took place sometime later, after Optimus and Megatron had seemingly died and the factions had divided into splinter groups. Grimlock led an Autobot team known as the Lightning Strike Coalition. Grimlock was targeted by a being known as The Fallen, alongside Blitzwing, Hot Spot and Jeffire (who Grimlock kept trying to kill for meeting with Shockwave, he got the wrong end of the

stick). The only one to put up a fight, Grimlock was captured, with the intent of using him to wake Primus, which would in turn summon Unicron. Fortunately, Grimlock broke free and took part in a joint attack by both factions. He didn't get to take on the Fallen again though.

Grimlock's final appearance would be in the third War Within volume, *The Age of Wrath*. The war was ending and Grimlock was both the leader of a team known as the Dynobots, and Ultra Magnus' right hand man. He spent his time boosting Magnus' morale, which distracted him from his own worries about what he'd do with himself in peace times. He never got to find out however, as a summit with Ratbat and Shockwave was sabotaged and Grimlock was killed saving Magnus from an assassin's bullet. Grimlock's ultimate fate remains unclear as Dreamwave's closure left the series unfinished. But considering he was around in modern times, chances are he was back on his feet by the end.

Grimlock's story with Dreamwave had one more part, in a 6 issue crossover with GI Joe. His role was a simple "good soldier" archetype. He only appeared in Volume 1, although he may have returned at some point in Volume 2 if it had been continued.

IDW Comics

Grimlock's first appearance in an IDW title was in *Spotlight: Shockwave*, written by Simon Furman. Hunting Shockwave because of an embarrassing defeat, the Dinobots were forced to take animalistic forms due to an unusually high level of energon on late ice age Earth. Disgusted by the mammals, Grimlock instead scanned a fossilised T-rex. Orbital bouncing to the planet, the Dinobots battled Shockwave, but eventually lost as he unlocked a new primal programme. But Grimlock was unwilling to accept defeat and had a back-up plan. His ship fired on a volcano, the lava burying the six transformers for the next 10,000 years. They were eventually excavated by a small archaeological team, whose work was taken over by Skywatch, an anti-transformers organisation. In *Spotlight: Grimlock*, Skywatch attempted to gain control of

Grimlock, but their efforts were sabotaged by Scorponok. Grimlock was freed and in a bad mood. He broke free and made a run for it, confused as to where and when he was. For a while he felt lost, without his team who he felt he had betrayed with his failsafe and without any knowledge of what had happened over the years. It was in this frame of mind he was confronted by Scorponok, who wanted Grimlock to work for him, revealing that the Dinobots were on Ultra Magnus' list of criminals. Grimlock refused but was unable to take on Scorponok due to his Headmaster upgrade. About to die, Grimlock took a million to one chance, and activated his ship's recall. Miraculously, the ship was still around and online and Grimlock was safely bounced to its helm. Enraged and with a renewed desire to find his team so he could make things right, Grimlock made ready for a war of his own.

In *Maximum Dinobots*, Grimlock was stuck on his ship in New Zealand. The vessel needed repairs and in an act of desperation, Grimlock contacted some less than reputable acquaintances. Scorponok meanwhile had integrated Grimlock into his grand scheme and launched an assault using his Sunstreaker clones. In a fight, Grimlock held his own, but they managed to orbital bounce him to the town of Fallon, forcing Skywatch to respond with their new attack force, the Dinobots. Scorponok, having taken control, used the Dinobots against Grimlock to cause maximum carnage, which he would repair by having his army save the day, all part of a grand glorious design. The Dinobots, restored to life, were enraged with Grimlock for sacrificing them all for one win, and no matter what, Grimlock had a hard time justifying his actions.

Eventually, the freed Dinobots and Grimlock, under serious assault by hundreds of Headmasters, were saved by Grimlock's "acquaintances", the Monsterbots. Swoop and co, although somewhat reconciled, were angered that Grimlock refused to leave Scorponok be, blaming it all on his injured pride. Meanwhile, Skywatch had activated Shockwave, implanting a bomb that required a reset every twenty four hours or it would explode. The plan was to use Shockwave to tidy up the mess they'd made. Shockwave

instead found a locked Soundwave and entered into a deal with him. At Scorponok's base, the Dinobots begrudgingly joined Grimlock in his assault. It wasn't going well until the clones were deactivated by Sunstreaker and Hunter. Hot Rod appeared on the scene, having been tortured by Scorponok, and all was well, until Sludge collapsed from a blast from an enraged Scorponok. Grimlock stood over Sludge's lifeless body as Scorponok readied for his revenge, only to be interrupted by Shockwave. The two Decepticons battled, and the Dinobots made a break for it. All but Grimlock. Sludge's loss made Grimlock realise that he's destroyed the people who mattered to him the most and that for centuries he's looked at things from the wrong perspective. He would make things right. His first step was to try and literally beat the life back into Sludge. It seemed he had failed, and enraged, Grimlock turned on Scorponok, who was abandoning his battle with Shockwave. With his main target getting away, he turned on Shockwave. The pair tore into each other, seemingly evenly matched.

Help came in the form of the returned Dinobots, who had decided it was better to fight and die. They were joined by a revived Sludge. Grimlock sent them after Scorponok, and continued his battle with Shockwave. Shockwave however, had lost interest. He revealed he had used the time their battle had bought to allow Soundwave to sample the reset frequency on the bomb and deactivate it. He considered their fight over. Grimlock wasn't about to let him leave, and used a bomb to take them both out. The Dinobots, having defeated Scorponok, found themselves now confronted by Ultra Magnus, who had tracked Scorponok to Earth. Grimlock, imprisoned on Magnus' ship, was told his efforts against two of the most dangerous Decepticons would commute his treason sentence. All Grimlock cared about was that the Dinobots were let off, wanting all the blame put on him. Magnus agreed to the proposal. But as he turned to leave, he asked, were the Dinobots too tough or too stubborn to die? Grimlock, his future uncertain, but happy because he had saved Sludge, said "Both".

Minor Appearances

Grimlock has made a number of appearances in minor stories. He played a minor role in the second Devil's Due GI Joe crossover, with an expanded role in the third. He appeared in the DVD pack in comic, *The Beast Within* (as a combiner no less). He had a role in the IDW Beast Wars comics, although not one with a lot of time in the spotlight. In the *Universe* comic, Grimlock briefly appeared in his War Within body. In Japanese fiction, Grimlock briefly showed up in *Headmasters*, *Transformers PD-Type*, Comic Bon Bon's *Classics* manga and the *Great Transformers War* comic.

And there it is. 25 years of attitude, anger, muscle and fire breathing. Grimlock has gone through an enormous amount of character evolution over the years, becoming what I consider to be the most complex character in the series. His shift from dumb animal to brutal tactician fascinates me and I look forward to what must be an inevitable return to IDW's work. Some consider him the Wolverine of Transformers, I consider him a whole other kettle of fish, one that interests me to no end. Here's to another quarter of a century of the king. As he once said himself "Me Grimlock no bozo, me king!"

THE TRANSFORMERS UNLIMITED



25 Years Of Transformers

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Allspark	Gregg Berger	Silverbolt
Auto Assembly	Grimlock	Simon Furman
Autobot	Hasbro	Soundwave
Beast Wars	Ian James Corlett	Starscream
Blackarachnia	Matrix	Takara
Bumblebee	Maximal	The Fallen
Cheetor	Megatron	Transformers
Cybertron	Michael Bay	Transwarp
Cybertronian Times	Optimus Prime	Waspinator
Decepticon	Peter Cullen	
Energon	Predacon	
Golden Disk	Sideburn	

"Fire In The Dawn" A Beast Wars/G1 post 'Possession' crossover, by Clogs

I've got a bad feeling about this... Rhinox's checking the scanner again. And he's shaking his head...

"Hi, honey - I'm home!" Rattrap swaggers in from late patrol; a scent of hot sand, hot oil and yeah, well, hot rat.

"Where's Optimus?" I demand, turning from the defense grid monitor.

He waves me aside. "With Chopperface, on a wider sweep. Say's he's got this *itch*. So? He's a monkey."

"Ape," corrects Rhinox absently. "Hmm, the transwarp shift anomaly is rising off the scale."

That's what worrying him, then. "Getting bigger?"

"Nope, just stronger. It's like Starscream left the bathplug out - only the bath is another phase space and anything might leak through..."

"Know much history?" Dinobot steps out of the hatch access, cocks one bright saurian eye at me and transforms.

I try to get Rhinox's attention, but he's busy again with the scanner and I swear he's a coupla shades paler than normal. Must be the lighting in here.

"I've done some research on what's available in the databanks," I say, standing up, folding my arms. Actually, Optimus did the research and I got the fallout during watch a planetary diurnal ago, but what the heck.

"Um." Dinobot scratches his sharp chin with sharp claws. Then he grins, all sharp white teeth. "You, then, will be prepared for our guest."

Rattrap can't resist. "If I'd a' known, I'd a' baked cookies."

"They're flying in. ETA..."

The ship shakes. It's stuck in the rocks, so I'd guess all the rocks are shaking too; not nice, given the drop out there. One of the proximity alarms goes off big-time, flashing red lights strobing the bridge like a disco, only the tune's better. Rattrap bangs his fist against a console and the noise whirrs to silence.

"...now."

* * *

"His name," says Optimus Primal. "Translates as *Skyfire*; or maybe *Jeffire*. Some of those old words have several interpretations. He's tracking Starscream's Spark to return it to the correct time-frame reference before the anomaly it's causing by tunneling through the continuum radiates irreversible damage."

Uh? Rattrap is thinking the same, judging by his whole body language. Dinobot shrugs. Rhinox, however, leans forward and I just know he's gonna say something with massive implications: "Right."

"That's it? 'Right'?" I radiate as much disbelief as I can.

Rhinox gives me a tired look, spreads his hands. "It's quantum, kid."

Optimus smiles. "Skyfire needs recharge, but he doesn't intend to remain long, given the planet's high energon field and the urgency of his mission."

"He's following Starscream..." I get this feeling, like I've eaten a mouthful of butterflies. "He's configured for space! That could be..."

"No." Optimus shakes his head. "Any suggestion he take us back to Cybertron would be grossly disrespectful. And, I suspect, impossible. The only reference he has is Starscream's trail and he can't afford to lose it."

"And we cannot, without dishonour, turn Skyfire from his duty," Dinobot speaks up. "So - he survived. But, I wonder...."

"Why can't he help us? We know he succeeded. I mean, we're all here!" I cry.

Rhinox goes to check his scanner again. "Quantum," he mutters darkly.

Since I got nothing else to do, I go back to my station. Man, it's strange to be recording *that* symbol on the screen. Nothing happening... Then: "I've got Pred signatures!" Three of them, converging on us really, really quickly. They probably think we're still in no condition to put up a fight. I snatch my gun.

There's no time to adjust the newly-repaired forceshield to fit round Skyfire. Optimus goes command, ordering everyone except Rhinox outside. And that's when I get to see him for the first time, outlined by starlight as he rises beside *The Axalon*. Sighing theatrically, Dinobot gently pushes my lower jaw up.

"I am pleased to greet you." The deadly polite voice is as big as the 'bot towering waaayyyy

above me. He bows; there's that red symbol, but it's faded. He frowns, obviously noting our battle-ready status. "What is the emergency?"

"Incoming Predacons," Optimus explains briefly before he's snapping deployment orders. "Dinobot and Rattrap - take point. Cheetor - cover our guest. I'm going airborne."

There's a lot of him to cover. Oh, sure, I've seen the old vids and read the sourcebooks, but most of the still surviving Autobots (and Decepticons) upgraded to smaller, more efficient bodies and became... us. Out of respect, we don't even have any old exoforms on museum display.

We move in front of Skyfire, weapons ready, but the jet doesn't wait to be guarded. He strides to meet the foremost Pred with a happy shout: "Grimlock!"

"The best bit," I decide. "Was when he picked Megatron up, yesss!"

Rattrap begs to differ. "Nah - when Megatron realised what gun envy *really* means..."

Rhinox finally moves from his scanner, but it isn't to join the party. "I think I've discovered the reason for the anomaly. It's Skyfire. I've no idea why, but he's triggered a spacetime singularity that could destroy the planet within cycles."

I'm confused. "But I thought the problem was Starscream?"

"He barely left a blip, coming in or going out, although he did open the warp," Rhinox explains, turning to Optimus. "The only solution is for Skyfire to retrace his path and, hopefully, that'll reverse the effect."

"I'm not so sure he'll want to give up on Starscream." Optimus is grave, voice very soft.

"He doesn't have a choice. If he carries on the pursuit, there's every chance the continuum will rupture in his wake."

"Whoa, like the end of everything?" Rattrap pretends horror, holding his hands up to his face.

Rhinox isn't laughing.

As it turns out, Skyfire receives the news and Rhinox's digitised findings with something like relief. Seriously... His optics flicker to black, and then they come on again and he nods. "The conclusion seems irrefutable."

"We don't know why it's happening, which means we can't find a solution." Optimus spreads his arms in a helpless gesture. "I'm sorry."

"I mistakenly assumed Starscream was the problem, not I for following him." Skyfire turns his face to the two moons setting on the horizon and steps back from us. "I had hoped for an ending, but even the future is a war. Farewell, Maximals." He transforms. Like, I'll never forget that...

We have to duck for cover when his engines ignite and he's gone without waiting for a reply. Optimus brushes off night-chilled dust and salutes the shimmering air: "Good luck, Skyfire."

"I have his trail," Rhinox announces from the scanner only moments after we get back inside the bridge.

"So do I," I call out, running to flick the defense grid to a wider, but more unstable configuration. An Autobot symbol, tiny and wavering, touches the ionosphere. What's that? I've got two signals. Some kind of reflection? The scanner shouldn't be able to pick up anything that far away through the energon distortion. I try to lock on it, but it winks out. "Hey!"

"Anomaly closing rapidly," Rhinox reports. "I hope Skyfire can out-fly the implosion."

"Amen to that." Optimus crosses to stand beside me. "Anything wrong, Cheetor?"

"Dunno, BigBot. I was picking up something out beyond Tigatron's old stamping grounds, and then it disappeared." I smile, apologise, shrug. The reading was too brief. "Ah, guess it was nothing..."

"Dangerous Liaisons" by Robert Lock

They say whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad. Megatron was a firm believer in this philosophy.

"Starscream as my second in command I leave it up to you to organise the reinforcements from Cybertron. Also because of your disappointing performance recently I have assigned you the post of Nebulan Liaison Officer."

Starscream cringed.

"What happened to Cindersaur?"

Megatron looked grim.

"He's gone mad."

Starscream shrugged.

"And..."

Megatron leaned forward

"More mad than usual, he thinks he's a Turbofox. You start immediately. I believe he has some appointments lined up already. Remember you have to leave them intact we need Skorponok's faction too much.

Starscream looked up.

"Ahh Vorath."

"Greetings Starscream I need to requisition Motormaster."

Starscream blinked

"Motormaster whatever for?"

"I need to go shopping."

Starscream shook his head.

"Motormaster is a proud warrior I don't think it is an appropriate use of his time, what about Lon...."

Vorath shook his head.

"Not Long Haul, have you ever tried to park a large dump truck in a Wal-Mart car park plus he's not easy to pack. Loading your shopping by ladder tends to take a while."

Starscream frowned.

"We could always do a few raids. Divebomb could..."

Vorath shook his head again.

"We need a balanced diet and specific items, raiding trucks tend to yield lots of a single item. We've only just got over that Heinz truck he brought back last month. Plus they're not always useful. What were we supposed to do with a cargo trailer full of feminine hygiene products?"

Starscream blinked

"Um improvised wound dressings..."

Vorath looked grim

"It's not good enough. We need a balanced diet. Krunks had to have his armour let out again. Snapdragon can barely transform without chaffing."

Starscream was lost for words.

"Um...um..."

Vorath persisted.

"If Motormaster doesn't want to do the grocery run we need more transports."

Mindwipe emerged from the shadows.

"Hypnotising pizza delivery boyzz izz interfering with my work. How am I supposed to contact the other side if I'm constantly interrupted having to wipe the memories of the delivery boy for the Slicery."

Starscream shrugged.

"I'll see what we can do...."

* * *

Starscream looked up.

"Ah Slugslinger how can I be of assistance."

"I need you to get me some actors now."

Starscream looked quizzical.

"Actors?"

"Yes Caliburst has written a play and he wants to put it on."

Starscream half rose and leaned forward on his desk.

"Well he can't have any we're not allowing organics to run round here, look what happened with that Finkelburg fleshling."

Slugslinger shrugged.

"Just do it ok, he says if he can't put on his masterpiece he's going on strike."

Starscream banged the desk.

"On strike, on strike, he's not back on Nebulos now you know."

Slugslinger glowered.

"Well you know who'll get the blame."

Starscream looked resigned

"I'll see of I can recruit some thespians with the new intake."

Slugslinger grimaced.

"I don't care where they're from as long as they can act."

* * *

Brisko knocked tentatively.

"I want to talk to you about the food Vorath got doesn't he know I'm lactose intolerant. My allergies...."

Starscream glared

"Out fleshling out do not disturb me with your petty concerns."

* * *

Megatron glared from the monitor at Starscream.

"Would you care to explain why one of my best shock troopers is incapacitated due to his head having swelled up to twice its normal size."

Starscream shuffled his feet.

"Um well Lord Megatron..."

Megatron moved closer to the camera.

"Enough of your sycophantic whining. I have given you a job and I expect you to do it."

* * *

Monzo strode into Starscream's office

"Starscream I need a Stunticon for...."

Starscream looked coldly at Monzo

"Do not disturb me just fill out the requisition form and select whoever's on duty."

* * *

Breakdown stormed into the office.

"What were you thinking, assigning me to special duty with the Nebulans? They wanted to use me to establish relationships with female organics of the opposite sex. They

went cruising with the radio on and the windows down. They were deliberately trying to get people to look at me. They tried to get the female organics to drape themselves all over my bodywork to touch me."

Breakdown shuddered and grimaced.

"What were you thinking?"

Weirdwolf barged in to the room claws clattering

"Thinking what you were? This new regulation that all headmaster units must close to partners stay is wrong. Fight in Wolf mode can I..."

Weirdwolf growled softly.

"Disguise myself as canine have I to and hang about while Monzo in organic activities indulges. Refuse I anymore to Husky disguise myself as and dumb play while Monzo with female organics fraternises."

Weirdwolf huffed.

"Longer no outside rooms wait I will with sock door handle on yes. Solution find out must you yes."

Starscream rolled his optics

"It's not as if I haven't got enough problems. Those slaggin' Nebulans we'd be better off without them."

Weirdwolf growled softly

"Too late to change now it is solution find you better."

* * *

Survival in the Decepticon ranks was all about balancing conflicting loyalties, maintaining a loyal following while not appearing to be a threat. Unpopular officers did not last long, they tended to fall victim to unfriendly fire or just disappear. To survive was a delicate balancing act of maintaining popularity and respect. Starscream's

unenviable task was to fulfil his role and keep everyone relatively happy.

Starscream sighed as he pored over the viewscreen looking over the available troops. He had to find the right ones to keep everyone happy Megatron especially.

* * *

Starscream stood proudly at the side of the Space Bridge portal

"Let me present Clench and Scourge, The Micromaster Battle Patrol and um Cement Head and Terror Tread.

Starscream looked closer at the Micromaster Transport noting the lack of cargo space.

"Whose transport I feel is a slightly misnamed I think but whom I'm sure will make a fine addition to our fighting force.

Starscream gestured as further new arrivals arrived.

Starscream gestured to them.

"The Micromaster Sports car patrol. A fine sleek addition to our ranks guaranteed to turn umm I mean pound heads."

A Trio of sleek femme-bots came through the Spacebridge.

"Let me introduce you to Stiletto, Whiplash and Electra and their Nebulan partners. and last a unit of crack multi-changers: Limelight, Stalls, Flats, Props, Wings, Stagecraft, Score, Circle and Diver.

Diver a silver femme held up a hand.

"It's pronounced Dee-Vah Darling"

Limelight nodded to Starscream

"We like to think of ourselves more of a crack Troupe but we are still the best at what we do, don't you know."

Stagecraft moved into the room.

"A mech in his lifespan plays many roles."

Megatron nodded slowly

"Starscream come with me I have matters I wish to discuss."

Starscream followed Megatron into the corridor

"Starscream I wish to speak to you about your new recruits from Cybertron. I have concerns, grave concerns."

Starscream bowed nervously.

"You do master? If it is about the..."

Megatron interrupted.

"It is Clench, his reputation precedes him. I fear he will try to usurp my position. Despatch him Starscream."

Starscream rubbed his hands together.

"Back to Cybertron my Lord."

Megatron continued to walk along the corridor.

"He has powerful allies we dare not deal with him more permanently though perhaps... Send him back through the space bridge.

Although you may want to peruse the file on Crosscut first. As for the rest of the reinforcements despite some of their eccentricities they seem to be worthy additions to our forces. As for your new post as Nebulan Liaison Officer, you seem to be handling it well, thinking outside the box very good, creative solutions, it is good for you. As part of your management development I am considering making the post permanent. Although if you perform well on the task we just discussed it may not be necessary."

* * *

There was a knock on the door. Whiplash stood framed in the doorway. She removed her head and it transformed into a female Nebulan.

"The girls asked me to come and see you. We need to talk off duty clothing allowance, cosmetics allowance and could we get a stylist to get to do house calls. We've drawn up a list I'll just leave it in your in tray. There's no rush anytime this evening will do.

Starscream slumped down on a seat as he watched the retreating figure. He picked up a data-pad on Space Bridge engineering.

Sometimes whatever you did you just couldn't win.

"A Night At Maccadam's Old Oil House" by Nick Snowden

Ah Cybertron. A planet twisted by war, no matter the reality. However in the deepest dank holes of Cybertron you can find a place, no matter your faction, you are welcome, where many individuals be them Autobot or Maximal, Decepticon or Predacon, Minicon or Micromaster all are welcome, to this place provided they have the finances to pay... this place is Maccadam's Old Oil House. I am a regular.

Sitting beside me was a dear friend. He and I met many cycles ago, right here in this very bar. His red chassis shone under yellow light as he slammed back some pure grade oil with reckless abandon. Table manners, I am sad to say, were not his area of expertise...we both looked around at the regulars in the bar.

Doubledealer, a Decepticon agent with a large missile on his shoulder, shifted uneasily in a game of chance with Counterpunch, a garishly coloured sedan-bot who was clearly hiding something. They both seemed to be trying to outwit the newcomer to their game, an ominous looking fellow by the name of Sideways. One glance at that table and one could tell: there was no way this would end well for any of them, I rolled my eyes took a swig of my oil.

From the corner of my eye I could see Grimlock. A huge fellow in silver and gold. A tyrannosaurus rex big on brawn but not too

much in the brain department. He was arm wrestling with who appeared to be a mirror image of himself albeit very distorted and quite angular with very pointed shoulders. He had what I can only imagine was a flaming club or sort next to him...the match seemed to be pretty even at the moment.

My eyes darted down back at my drink. I noticed that Wreck-Gar, an Autobot stand up, watches far to much television, was doing a comedy act yet again by a poster in the far right hand corner. I looked at my friend. He spoke in a gravely gruff tone "ok Pardner, my round." He got up and went to the bar. I noticed him for a moment flirting with Chromia, she was looking curvaceous and pretty as always in he light aquamarine finish man if I was a few stela-cycles younger.

I lie back and think of the prehistoric planet I miss and the beauty of the place in general I think of my comrades when we fought the beast wars, I let out a deep sigh, finish my drink and remember... I remember the old crew, well, they just don't come in much anymore. Something of a shame, really.

* * *

I cast my eyes over to a small table. In a far corner of the bar, where Kup, a turquoise coloured, old timer was regaling tales of past battles alongside two other old timers, fairly new arrivals actually not sure of there names, one was quite clearly an ambulance, angular, rust type stubble on his chin, gruff in appearance but he seemed a kind soul...the other arrived a couple of days back tall, had a walking stick, some type of jet I think, quite clearly senile and loud

From what I remember, Darkwing and Dreadwind were loudly discussing what they were going to sing next on karaoke night. You know always wondered if they were brothers can never tell which is which.

* * *

Suddenly the bar door slammed shut. A figure stood there in a sullied piece of material, a menacing hook for an arm. With Glaring red eyes he sat down at the table with

Dobledealer and the others. There eyes narrowed... I could not hear the conversation all I could hear was the words wager, shoulder missile, long barrelled rifle and minicon. I shuddered uncomfortably at his presence.

"Who is that troublemaker" I whispered, my comrade replied " that punk, Lockdown, bounty hunter"
"you mean like that Devcon fellow"
"No nothing as decent as Devcon, he's got a real hankerin' for upgrades, been adminin' my grappling hook for sum time"

I saw the doorman, who was in a way a reminder of my friend, he was squat black, wide and had two massive cannons on each arm, he like my friend had a certain battle hardened look on his face...he threw a small orange minor out with a slingshot his annoying vocals spoke "Wheelie say it's not my day", as I heard a familiar voice outside go "Ah man Wheelie now will never get in"
"beat it spots" cried the doorman, his cannons I could hear spin and lock in place. I smiled oh Cheetor...give it a couple of years, kid.

We watched as a newcomer strode in the already busy establishment, I say strode, he was balanced on two gargantuan wheels and he well he kind of rolled towards the bar, surprised he fit through the door to be honest, I glanced over to my comrade who was getting up to go to the bar again, he looked over at me he said "leakin lubrican't, he's a big one, not a looker though"

* * *

As I shut my eyes, I take a long intake of my drink, I hear a chair get kicked, and I look briefly over to a rather lanky Lockdown character walking this way, leaving the other three players rather slaggged off behind him, yet Lockdown was empty handed. I just think to myself, ignore him he will go...yes that'll work

* * *

I open one eye, he looks down at me
"Can I help you" I say lethargically

"Mmmm Nice bit of kit y'got there, large and in charge, what's that, some kind of off-world animal?"

"I was stationed on earth in archaic times, heard of the Beast Wars"
"Earth, you say, that planet does shows up a quite a bit, now on to business, care to play a game"

"No thank you" I sighed with an annoyed tone in my voice

"I wasn't asking!!" he said darkly, pointing his hook at me

"I beg your pardon?"

"He said he is not interested decepti-creep, slag off" my friend spoke as he slammed his fist on the table, he had snuck up behind Lockdown, back from the bar for a second time, yet another oil in hand

Lockdown's eyes greedily stared down at my seldom used EMP nullifier

"I have a particular weakness for EMP equipment"

"Excuse me I did tell you I am not interested" I replied, harsher

"Well will have to do business again some time" he turned, his dirty material waved as he swung around.

Lockdown headed to the door, he walked through looking down and saw what I gathered was a pair of blue legs....he looked up

"Hello Lockdown" the figure shadowed stepped forward

"Devcon...I see ya found me...outta my way" the hook withdrew in and a chainsaw appeared

"You want to do this the hard way" Devcon replied, he moved with great speed and executed an uppercut on the unsuspecting foe

Lockdown landed with a thud on a table, the table where Grimlock was sitting, this wasn't going to end well, not well at all.

"What you looking at stupid"

"Me... Grimlock not stupid....me Grimlock King" the towering warrior spoke as he kicked Lockdown over to the bar

Lockdown rose to his feet and clicked his neck. He sprinted forward toward his attacker, the doppelganger picked up his club

and swung at the foe. Lockdown ducked, the 'twin' missed and his club landed smacking Sideways in the side of arm, his eyes narrowed and his head lowered in to his body a smaller bot transformed in to a head and he pulled it on, a sure snap, it locked in place, a decepticon insignia appeared

* * *

This caused both Grimlocks to go in to a chaotic fury, they charged forward, in the resulting chaos Sideways was tackled through the table, Doubledealer annoyed aimed his missile, distracted by Lockdown he missed, the weapon spiralled, passed Counterpunch narrowly missing. He turned, looked at his opponent and reached over to strike him.

The missile landed, an explosion near the old timers. The jet shaped one leaped up
"WE'RE UNDER ATTACK... TO ARMS... FOR THE GLORY OF JETFIRE" he jumped into the affray. Kup and Ratchet looked at each other, their eyes rolled

"We better drag him back he is gonna go offline if we don't" Ratchet exclaimed
"Oh well... y'know this reminds me of the..."
"Now is not THE TIME Kup for a WAR STORY"

"Me Grimlock...love Kup's war stories" the t-rex spoke as he spun around his tail hitting that little orange bot, must of sneaked back in.

A new group arrived in the fight, fresh in from outside, apart from one, a luridly coloured blue shark type being who cowered under a nearby table. The others who joined the fray some to quick to identify joined the inevitable scrum...Mindwipe, a bat or a close approximation and Warpath, a crimson tank, I could just make out.

My eyes caught a spectre, on the roof of a building just outside across the street. A sinister, dark, thin figure was on top, a bullet came straight through the window and missed Lockdown's head by mere nanoseconds, it landed millimetres away from that orange kidbot's feet, talk about bad luck...I look back up at the building to see just a singular red eye, it vanished in the night

Mindwipe hypnotized the large Grimlock look-alike. Who in turn lulled of in to stasis, fell on Mindwipe in the process. The fight continued, fists flew, parts soared, much to Lockdown's greed, he grabbed a few. He kicked a small blue robot out of the way, wheels for feet, a kind of skeletal face, he smacked head first in to a wall, spouting obscenities, before a vase landed on his head knocking him out.

Warpath stood and shot left, right, centre.
"WHAM....take that....BAM" he bellowed, before Sideways tackled him, Warpath was pretty much unconscious. Grimlock grabbed a table, threw it like a discus. It splintered as it struck half a dozen bots. Sideways dodged the incoming table, launched over to Grimlock who caught him in-flight. Grimlock subsequently devastated the back of Sideways over his knee.

* * *

I noticed under a table Chromia, couple of barmaid's sheltering I turned to my comrade. He slammed his finished drink down. He looked down at me, a small smile came to his face. He cracked his knuckles.

"Shall we teach these protoforms how to really fight, Pardna"

"I was waiting to hear you say that" I reply

We both leapt unto action, making a direct line for where Lockdown was. Lockdown was now in a fight with Devcon, arms at each others throats, both equal in their ability. They parried, struck and blocked to no aim. Evenly matched warriors absolute.

I charged and knocked over a couple of stragglers, I turned ready to strike, me and my friend both realised at the last second who we were.

My comrade flew punch after punch, I looked at him and spoke

"So old friend, is every weekend like this for you these days"

"Only the good ones" he spoke, slamming an unfortunate Doubledealer's head in to the bar. Wheelie had come to, he had starting firing his slingshot at the Decepticon jets, Dreadwind and Darkwing, who in turn seized Wheelie and flung him out of the window.

Both my friend and I stepped forward, made swift work of the jets, thumped there heads together, they lied flaccid next to each other, we carried on directly towards Lockdown.

Lockdown lashed out at Devcon, Devcon fell, clearly in stasis-lock, my friend snuck up behind him, clasped his hand together, in the instant Lockdown turned. My friend rose with an uppercut, directly in to Lockdown's jaw

I looked down at my arm, the tan armour matted against the colour of the bar, my EMP device came out, I fired in a split second, it missed, Lockdown charged forward. I fired again, no affect, he activates his chainsaw, I fired up my chain-gun, shot, he deflected the bullets, we came in close, I kicked him down with authority, he jumped back up and leapt forward.

My comrade tackled him, I recalibrated the EMP device to a stronger setting, fired straight and true, my comrade rolled out of the way, the blast hit Lockdown dead centre on his chest.

The bounty hunter stricken with paralysis. He could not move a single piston, helpless against as all. A door swung open at the back, a figure shadowed in the darkness of that back room looked at the trouble maker. I could feel his cold stare he raised a hand, pointed, spoke "Barred" he barked, the stature just made a thumbs down gesture and the door was shut.

* * *

Devcon picked up the motionless body of Lockdown and limped slowly towards the exit. He shook my hand as he walked past and thanked me for helping him take out Lockdown, told me the troublemaker was going to rot in a prison for some time

My eyes panelled the room again, Grimlock and his equivalent were both sitting on Mindwipe and Sideways...they both nodded in my direction before continuing to sing their own praises at each other.



In Counterpunch's place stood his Autobot persona, Punch. He came up, pattered me on the back, before heading to the bar to get a drink. The door man headed outside, throwing that little orange kidbot's out yet again, while the barmaid called last orders.

I noticed Jeffire had managed to be held back, by Ratchet and Kup.

"UNHAND me, my oil boils for battle " "Jeffire" Ratchet said firmly "were TOO old for THIS slag, sides the fight is over NOW" "Y'know this reminds me of this barroom brawl at Mos..."

THWACK, Ratchet and Jeffire had both simultaneously punched Kup. They both looked at each other, smiled sat down and continued drinking.

I see Chromia at the bar ordering a last round in as my comrade comes up

"You got a mean right hook on ya, that was a laugh buddy" I clasp his hand and shake it "So Ironhide to the bar, my round" "Best idea you had all night Rhinox"

Transformers Revenge Of The Fallen Special

Movie Review by Leigh Jones

This is the film I've been waiting for all year.

I grew up watching Transformers and I still collect the comics, I have the original series on DVD, I have the 1986 film twice and the 2007 film twice on DVD. I do love Transformers, so lets get into this... But it won't be long

I wanna start by saying that I hate hate hate hate hate (hate) Michael Bay. I don't like his style, I don't like the way he sounds on commentaries, I just plain don't like him. And that's allowed isn't it? I mean its nothing personnel I just think most of his previous work isn't too great. BUT he did do a very good job with Transformers... and I do feel that this film is his shining moment. For most of this film it could have been any action director, I would of walked out and been a fan. He did an INCREDIBLE job with this film

and if he carries on like this then I'm willing to forget his older work and could say that this guy knows what he is doing and is good at it. There is no denying that he has a taste for flair, but while in his older films this has distracted me, with this film it works well and just fits in.
Directing: 8

OK so, the writing. This is where most of the flaw is. The plot is very silly and very stupid. It's all just so convenient. There isn't much real threat in this film. The humor is very childish. But, there are 2 points (that I won't mention) that made the film for me. One of them I said they had to do in this series of films or I would taker back any good things I said about it. But they did it here. And for me that makes the film. Just for doing that I forgive this film for all its flaws. If you are a fan of Transformers you will watch this, see the homages to the original materials and enjoy it. If you're not, shut down you're brain and ignore it all.
Writing: 6

OK, so the acting. John Turturo is always great. Shia and Megan are good. I really enjoy watching these two. I think they got their fame together and any film they are in together just makes both of them look better. But I do feel that some scenes may have been cringeworthy and I feel that it looks a bit forced or over acted by them (Shia in particular). Everyone else, Duhamel, Gibson, Rodriguez etc. all do very well. But I do feel that Duhamel wasn't used enough and didn't get the chance to show off a bit and Rodriguez was used too much and turned what could of been a funny character into an annoying punk.
Acting: 6

The music is... uhhhh. Most of the score is the same as what they did in the 2007 film, which is very lazy on Steve Jablonsky's point of view. But I loved the music he did for that film. So hearing it again was great for me. But it won't make everyone happy.
Music: 7

I watched Transformers many many times (3 times at the cinema, 3 times on a plane flight,



then at least 6 times on DVD when it came out). And I can tell I'll watch this film many many times. And I wanna explain something here:

I spend most of the year watching films like Blade Runner, 2001, Big Lebowski, Hidden etc. And while I love all these films...

I also go see a new film every week. And with films like Angels And Demons, Knowing, Push, Terminator Salvation, Notorious, etc. out this year...

And then I'm also a film maker so there's a lot of time writing and reading scripts, working on set and then the editing...

I love film making and I love the first films listed, but sometimes I need a break. And when there is a film that takes me back like this and doesn't make me think. A film I can put on and just relax, a film I can read, stop and watch it and not care what's going on, just feel the love towards Bumblebee and Prime and still get the thrills of the chasing and fight scenes... I need it.

Rewatch: 10

OK so if you liked Transformers (2007) you will love this film. It's more of the same just bigger and better. If you grew up with Transformers you should like this film.

A lot of critics are gonna pan this film and I will agree with everyone, any flaw and problem, yes it's true, believe it. But I feel that reviews are for films like Benjamin Button,

vehicle modes for the Autobots as well and for these it's hard to tell if the character statistics on the cards are referring to the Autobots in vehicle mode or just the normal cars. Either way, it seems to be a rather strange choice to have cars as cards when the characters themselves would suffice. It just made me think that the designers just ran out of ideas for characters part way through putting the pack together.

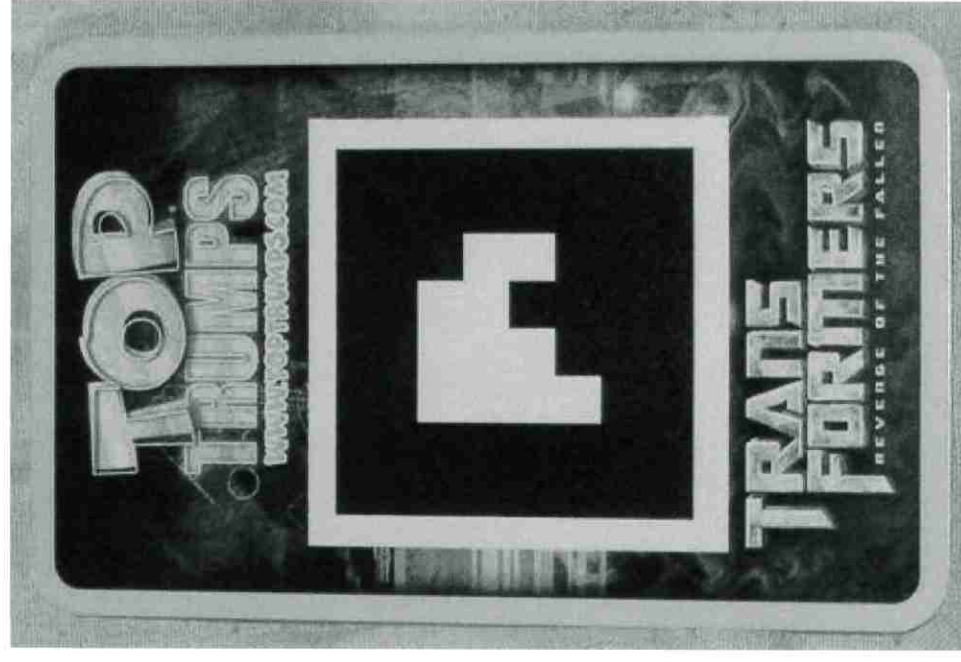


This time, the descriptions for the characters seem to leave a lot to be desired as well. They all seem to have been rushed and say very little about the characters they are referring to and the range of characters does seem bland... considering it's a TRANSFORMERS set, a few more Transformers wouldn't have gone amiss and indeed why just have devastator when we could have had cards for all of the Constructicons?

The game itself plays the same as all the previous Top Trumps games so if you've played before you know what to expect but the design and variety in the deck just means that it's not quite as fun to play as the

predecessor. If you haven't got either of them then it's still worth getting, but it's not something I would rush out to get having already got the previous set.

There is one key difference to this set that may swing it for players... if you haven't noticed from the pack, this is from the new 3D range of Top Trumps. On random cards in the pack are different patterns as you can see in the photo. Used in conjunction with a webcam and free software that you can download from the Top Trumps website, these activate an interactive game on your PC featuring animated 3D Transformers characters that you literally hold in the palm of your hand.



I tried this part of the game out a few times and really found it to be a novelty more than anything and frustrating at times to get it to work. When it did, it looked fantastic and it was pretty impressive seeing a fully animated movie Optimus Prime under your full control BUT it needs very good lighting conditions, a good webcam, a very steady hand and a LOT of patience!

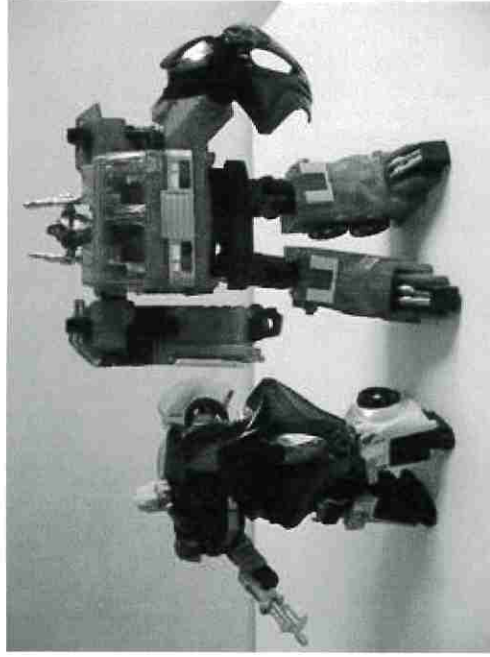
One thing I did find reassuring with the set is that you don't need to use the 3D aspect to play the game... otherwise I think the novelty would soon wear off and it would end up being relegated to the cupboard pretty quickly. As I said before, it's still a decent Top Trumps set and it is good to see Winning Moves try something different but it's not as good as the last one.

Now how about a G1 set please...?!

Kitbashing Welcome by Mark Brady

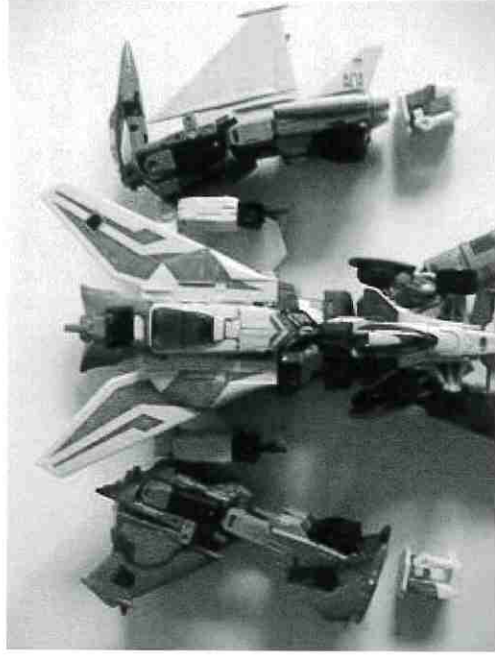
Hi to all Auto Assembly attendees!

I thought I'd swipe a little space in the Cybertronian Times to say hello and introduce myself.



My name is Mark Brady, known to most as Ravage on a few forums. I'm mostly known due to my kitbashes, which some will be on display around the workshops that I am holding over the weekend. I have joined the Auto Assembly committee this year, and will be looking to bring a new aspect to the convention over the course of the future.

I have been kitbashing for just over a year now, practicing different styles and techniques, always looking to improve what I create. What I am looking to do is get people interested in the idea of kitbashing, as it is great fun, and a way of expanding your own collection, and making it really personal.



I shall be on hand to help anyone interested in kitbashing, and with paints and parts provided, you could be taking home your first kitbash!

I'm looking forward to saying hello to you all, Regards,

Mark Brady

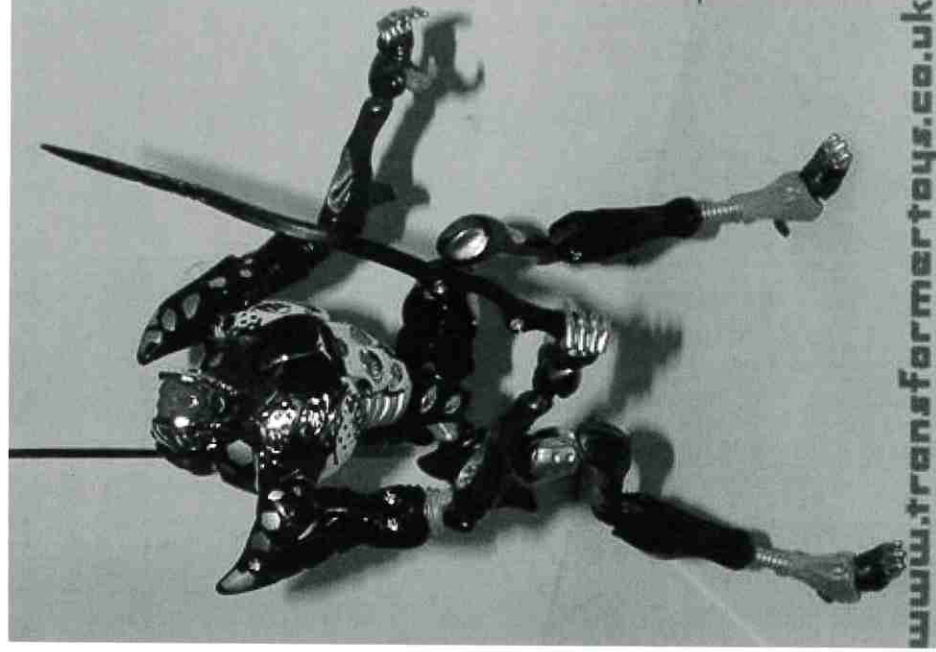
Lucky Draw Transformers - A Guide To Japanese Prize Items By David Mapes

Over the years Auto Assembly has been the global Transformers convention for seeing rare Transformers figures, often Japanese in origin, and the 2009 Auto Assembly convention expands on this theme with the largest single display of Japanese prize items. The items are often referred to as Lucky Draw items and, although often controversial, are some of the rarest and most expensive Transformers to buy.

Limited edition Transformers have been around for the history of the brand, from the S.T.A.R.S mail away exclusives (which included Ratchet in an all white box) to the two different versions of the Gold Convoy statues given away to Takara staff members. What you may not be aware of is that there is also a silver Chromedome statue, in the same style as the original gold Convoy (Optimus Prime statue) which is far rarer and more elusive. Other "Generation One" prize items included a gift set of the Transformers Junior figure, sealed in a large white box.

This white box packaging became an icon sign of what would later be dubbed a Lucky Draw toy.

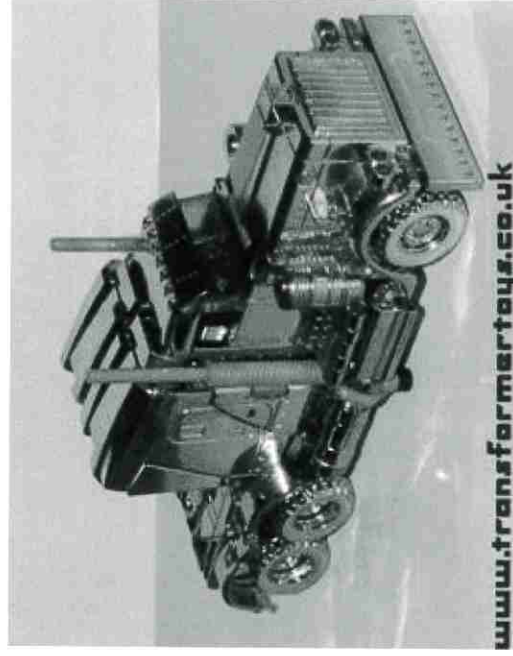
The boom of the Japanese prize items came with the success of Beast Wars in Japan in 1998, which lead to popular Japanese television and collectors magazines to offer limited edition re-coloured figures to their readers. The first of these items consisted of a Gold Chrome Beast Convoy (Optimus Primal), and a Gold Chrome Megatron. Three other gold Beast Wars toys were also said to have been produced, Cheetas (Cheetor), Dinobot and Rhinox, although these toys have yet to make it into modern collectors hands. Other limited edition re-coloured versions of Optimus Primal were also made including a blue version and a rarer red version. The gold version is limited to 10 pieces, the red to 20 and the blue to 30.



Winners were chosen from random and it is this random choice that bore the name Lucky Draw. The phrase combines the terms lucky dip and prize draw.

After the success of the first Beast Wars draws similar campaigns (competitions) were held for subsequent Transformers lines including Beast Wars II, Beast Wars Neo, Beast Wars Returns (Beast Machines), Transformers Car Robots (Robots in Disguise), Transformers Collector's Edition, Transformers Micron Legend (Armada), Transformers Super link (Energon), Transformers Galaxy Force (Cybertron), Robot Masters, Binaltech (Alternators), Masterpiece, Transformers Movie and Transformers Encore (Classics). For many collectors the ultimate Lucky Draw Transformers toy was the gold Masterpiece Convoy (Optimus Prime toy). The figure has sold for over \$4000 on several occasions, although it is not the rarest of the Japanese campaign figures.

Lucky Draw figures are not only limited to Japan, in more recent times America, Australia, Hong Kong, and the UK have also seen limited edition prize figures. For America it was a chromed Movie Optimus Prime toy (limited to 1), for Hong Kong and Australia it was a gold chromed Transformers Movie Optimus Prime statue (limited to 88 with 10 released in each location, the other 68 are still with Hasbro) and in the UK it was the three Transformers Animated Hardcopies which were shown off at Auto Assembly 2008.



Lucky Draw Transformers figures are often originally limited to only a few pieces, usually between 10 and 50, with some items (White Moon, Black Fire Convoy) being released in larger numbers. Occasionally figures are limited to less than 10 pieces such as the

limited Binaltech Meister figure (limited to 1 pc) and some of the early Beast Wars and Beast Wars II toys. That said the actual prize figures are often produced in greater quantities than the magazine competition gives away. In the past figures have also been used for store prizes (Black Super link Megatron), for website promotions (Galaxy Force Gold Master Galvatron and Gold Meglo Convoy). Most items have test shots produced in the final colours, or sometimes partially finished colours. These figures are often leaked and sold on the collectors markets via Yahoo Japan and most notably on eBay.com. These leaked figures are usually loose, although some are repackaged.

Some Lucky Draw Transformers will differ from the images shown within the magazines, usually as the image printed in the magazine has been reconstructed on a computer. Other figures, such as the Colouring Competition Grand Convoy figure was actually produced in a different colour scheme to the winning entry.

As with regular release toys there are different variations of Lucky Draw figures, most noted are the two variations of Transformers Galaxy Force Meglo Convoy. The TV Magazine prize came with a gold EZY Collection Galaxy Convoy whereas the Takara competition figure came with a regular EZY Galaxy Convoy. Other variations have included Gold Magmatron (weapon variations), Movie Optimus Prime, Encore Galvatron and Encore Convoy. The latter items variations appear to be a mixture of test shots and fake items (known as Lunchtime Specials by many collectors), there as the Movie Prime and Galvatron appear to be variations between the test shot and final release figure. The most obvious variant is that of Gold Lio Convoy, of which 1 gold plastic version has been seen compared to 2 Gold Chrome versions. The gold chrome versions have also shown red plastic as the base colour.



In more recent years fake Lucky Draw figures have been produced to cash in on the popularity, and to take advantage of the vast sums of money that change hands with a purchase of a Lucky Draw figure. Some of these fake items include silver versions of Transformers Movie Protoform Optimus Prime, Henkei Convoy, Big Convoy, gold versions of Encore Convoy and most worryingly gold Beast Convoys. Some of these fake Lucky Draw figures are made of high quality, most use official moulds, but some of the later pieces (Silver Big Convoy and an all-gold Big Convoy) are simply hand-painted figures. It can often be difficult to tell these figures from the official items from a picture on an auction. The best way is to compare the toy to other images online, such as those on www.luckydrawtransformers.com, on which you can find images of all the Lucky Draw items on display at Auto Assembly as well as original Japanese magazine scans. If you are looking at purchasing a gold item be sure to check the colour of the gold, as the newer fake figures use a much darker orange gold than the official items. It is also recommended that you buy boxed / carded items and purchase from reputable sellers. Lucky Draw Transformers Resources www.luckydrawtransformers.com www.transformertoys.co.uk

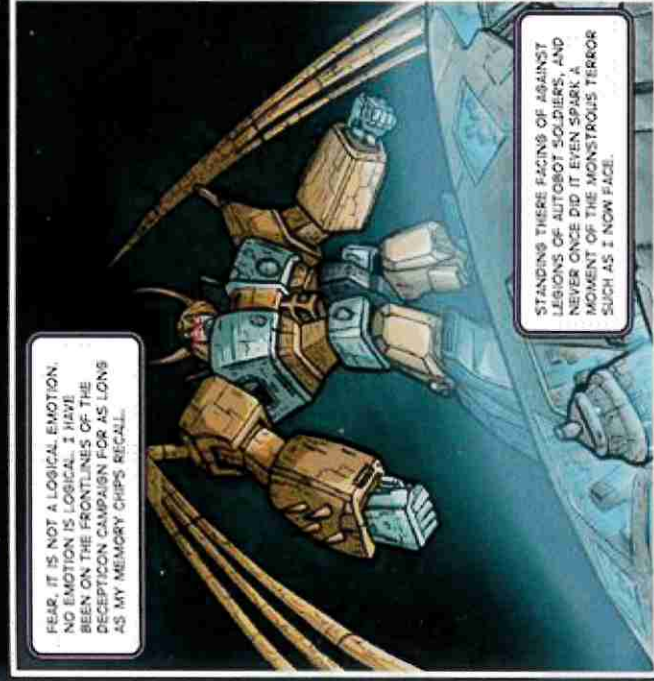
TRANSFORMERS: THE MOVIE

DATA FILE 002 - THE IMPURITY

Written By: DAVID WALLACE

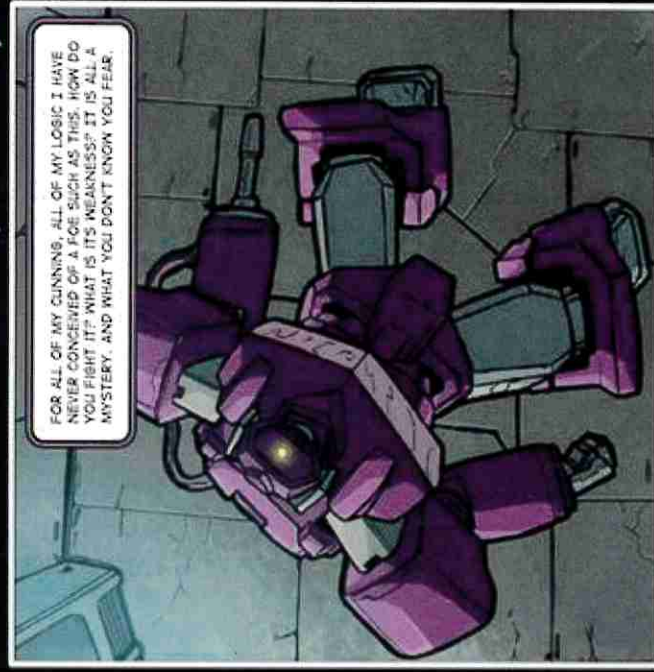
Art & Letters By: GARETH WATSON

Colours By: Javier Reyes



FEAR, IT IS NOT A LOGICAL EMOTION. NO EMOTION IS LOGICAL. I HAVE LONG KNOWN THAT THE DECEPTION CAN BEIN NEAR AS LONG AS MY MEMORY CHIPS RECALL.

STANDING THESE FACING OF AGAINST LEGIONS OF AUTOBOT SOLDIERS, AND NEVER ONCE DID IT EVEN SPARK A MOMENT OF THE MONSTROUS TERROR SUCH AS I NOW FACE.

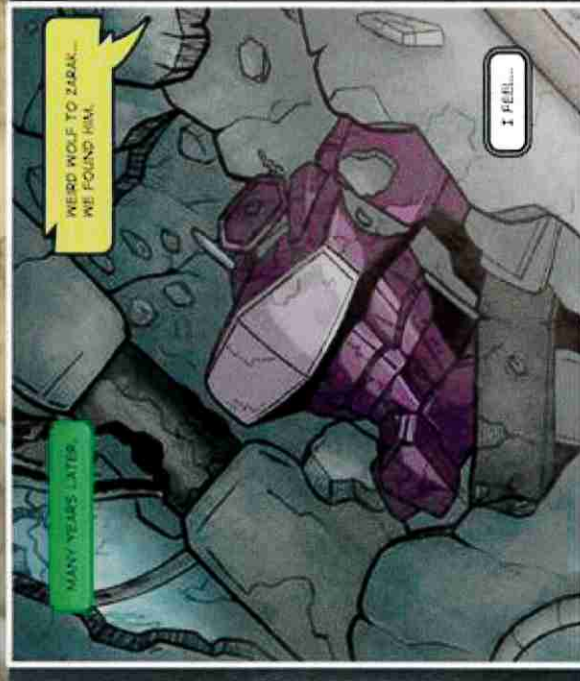


FOR ALL OF MY CUNNING, ALL OF MY LOGIC I HAVE NEVER CONCEIVED OF A FEE SUCH AS THIS. HOW DO YOU FIGHT IT? WHAT IS ITS WEAKNESS? IT IS ALL A MYSTERY. AND WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW YOU FEAR.

AND THEN I FEEL NOTHING....

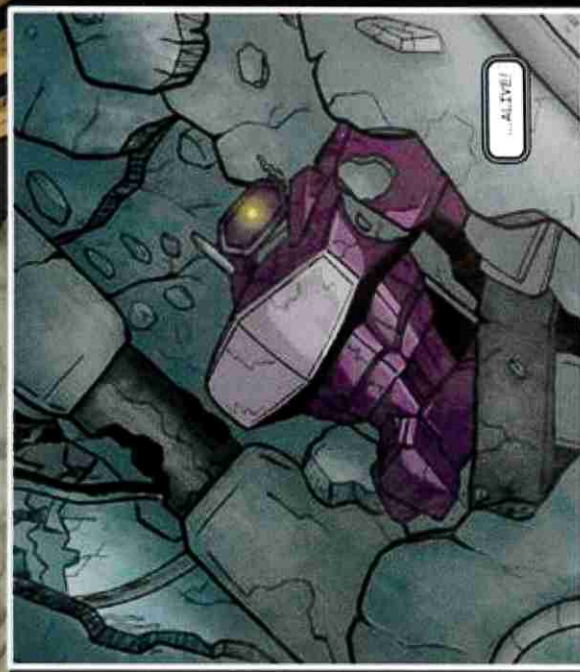


MY CAUSE MY DEVOTION ALL FORGOTTEN IN THE FACE OF FEAR, THE FACE OF DEATH.



WEIRD WOLF TO ZARAK... WE FOUND HIM.

I FEEL...



...ALIVE!

The Making Of An Exclusive by Simon Plumbe

For years, people have asked us about producing a convention exclusive for Auto Assembly. While we would have loved to have produced a toy, economics simply wouldn't allow it to happen. Not just because of the logistics of working with Hasbro, but the sheer quantity we would have to produce (several thousand toys) would make it almost impossible for us to afford to do it. So, apart from our exclusive postcards, pin badges, etc, the idea of a convention exclusive seemed pretty limited... until NOW!!

We contacted Chris Ryall of IDW Publishing to discuss the idea about an Auto Assembly exclusive variant cover of one of their comics as a convention exclusive this year. Chris seemed up for the idea but explained that as IDW don't handle sales directly the only way we could do it was if we had a Diamond trade account... so we needed to find a partner to make it happen. Knowing that Apocalypse Comics had worked with IDW before with their exclusive comics and were interested in attending Auto Assembly again, I approached them to see if they wanted to co-operate to make the comic a reality with them handling the production and sales on our behalf.

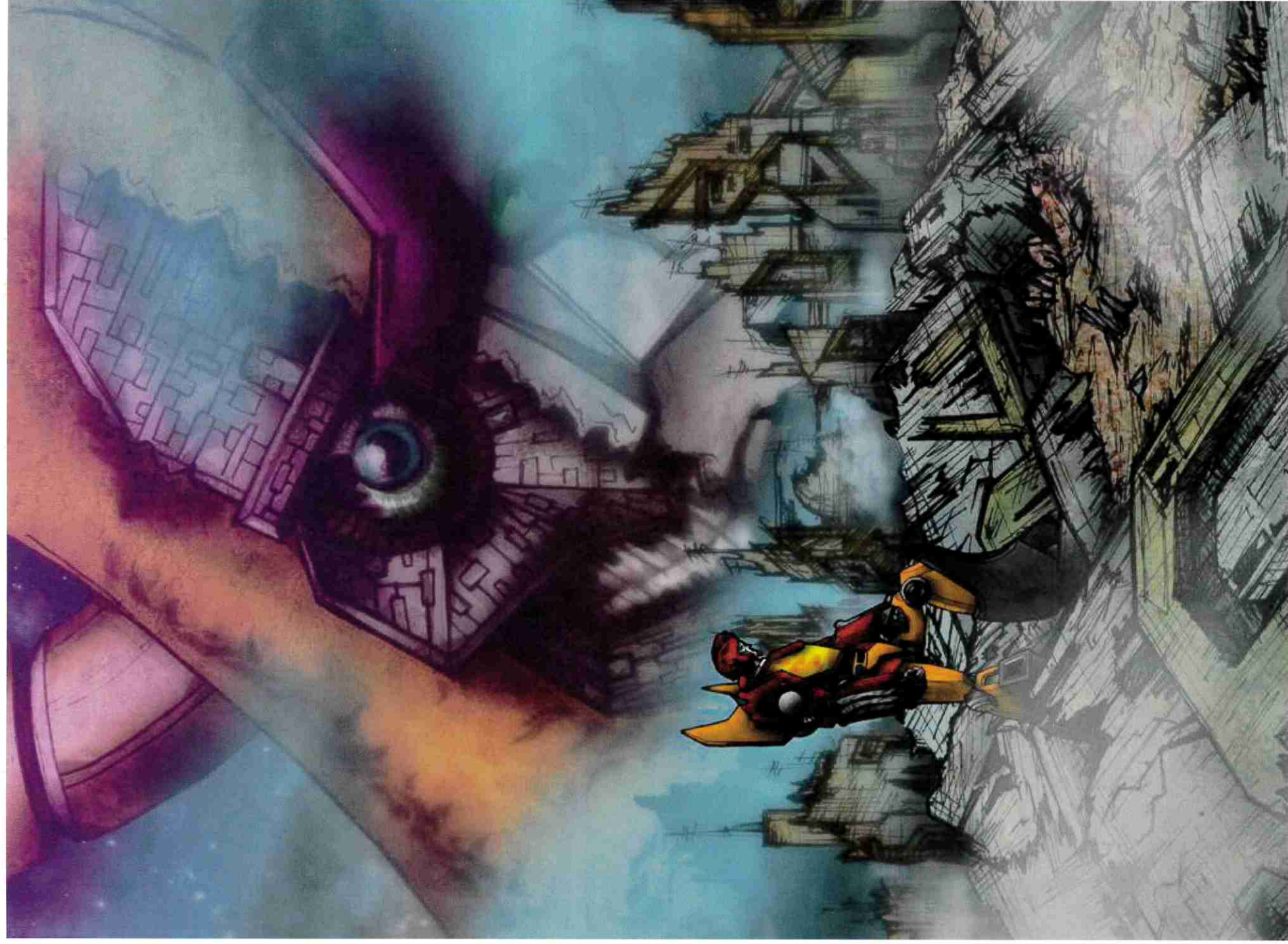
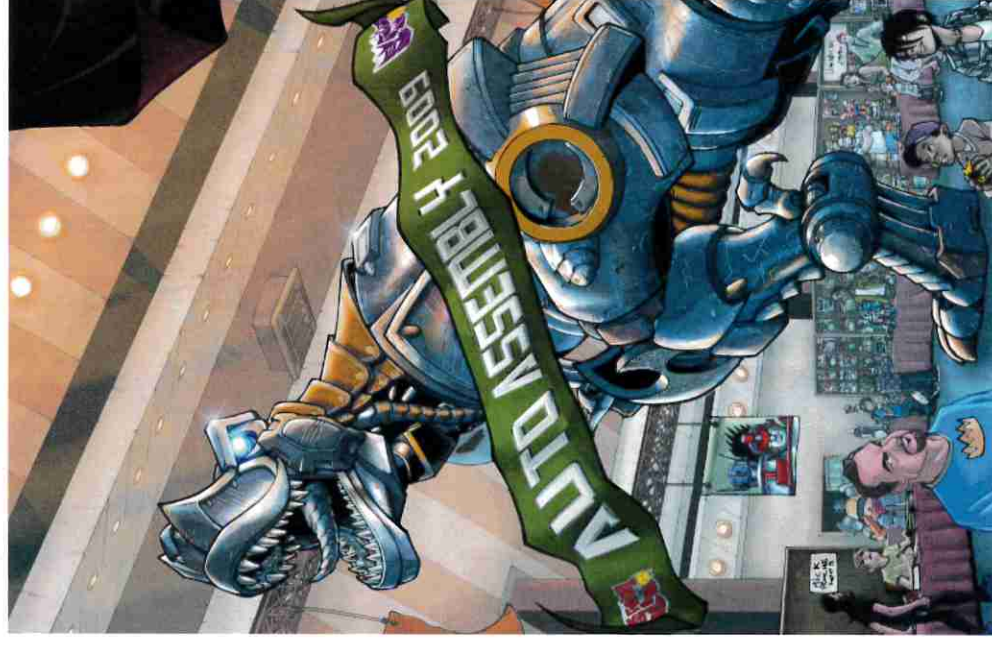
After a few chats with Mario Coleman from Apocalypse, we sorted that side of things out so we got to work on plans for the book... there were a couple of likely books that were due to be released at the same time as the convention - Spotlight: Metroplex and All Hail Megatron: CODA Issue 1. Naturally, we thought that Coda #1 made sense giving us a number one as our exclusive! So once we figured that out, we set on finding the creative team. After talks with Mario, IDW and talking to some of the AA guests, we had settled on Nick Roche for the pencils and a very enthusiastic Liam Shalloo to handle the colours.

As with a lot of the exclusive covers that Apocalypse have done in the past, they wanted to take an iconic scene known to fans everywhere and put a Transformers spin on it, so this cover took the closing scene from

Jurassic Park with the t-rex and set it somewhere a little more familiar...

The story itself doesn't focus on Grimlock, but naturally, we wanted to have the comic reflect the convention more than anything else!

When it came to the book, there were some changes late in the day. Rather than being titled Coda #1, IDW decided to continue the All Hail Megatron numbering so the book is now All Hail Megatron #13. Not ideal for us, but we felt that the content more than made up for it as IDW explained on their release... "The 12-part story was so popular we had to keep it rolling out for four more special issues! The two stories here set the stage for the next Transformers mega-saga (stay tuned, folks!). This is the ground floor! IRONHIDE and OPTIMUS PRIME deal with the fallout of last issue! Meanwhile, the DECEPTICONS begin to probe the mysteries of the AUTOBOT Matrix of leadership - that can't be good..." The best part about that... the Optimus Prime and Ironhide story is being written by none other than SIMON FURMAN!!



Anyway, back to the Auto Assembly book, and Liam was finally able to get to work on Nick's inked artwork. Liam said he wanted to make this one of his best pieces and he took much longer than usual to give us a cover to be proud over and we think you'll all love the finished piece...

We can't thank Nick, Liam, Mario and Chris enough for all of their hard work for making this happen. It's a stunning cover and we think that it's something that you'll all love and want to add to your collection as a fantastic souvenir of the convention as being the first ever comic produced by IDW for a European Transformers convention (and hopefully not the last!).

Transformers:

The Ultimate Interview

To do something special for this issue of The Cybertronian Times, we decided to speak to a number of Transformers celebrities - actors, writers, comic artists etc. and ask them a series of quick-fire questions. This is what we ended up with...

We managed to grab some time with:- Andy Schmidt (IDW), Bob Budiansky - Marvel US writer/editor and the man responsible for all of the bios for the G1 toys), Dan Gilvezan (G1 Bumblebee), David Sobolov (Beast Wars Depth Charge), Mike McConnohie (G1 Cosmos and Tracks, RiD Ironhide and Hot Shot) and Guido Guidi (TF comic artist).

Were you interested in Transformers before you got involved in them?

Absolutely. In the 80s, I was completely absorbed by the Transformers. Probably the only thing to ever unseat my X-Men obsession until girls did. How could I say no to IDW when they dangled my childhood in front of me like that? I had to be a part of Transformers as soon as the opportunity arose. (Andy Schmidt)

I've been a fan of the robots in disguise's concept since early '80, because I was already interested in Diaclone/Microman toys

(Dinobots especially) which were very popular in Italy. (Guido Guidi)

Why do you think Transformers have endured for so long?

It's a simple concept and the toys were awesome (and are awesome). But like all great characters, it was that the personalities were relatable that really made TF stick instead of, say, the Go Bots. It always comes down to character and Optimus Prime was compelling while Leader 1 was kind of like watching cardboard.

It's because they are such great characters that the first thing I wanted to do when I was brought on board as a Transformers editor was create an ongoing series. I'm thrilled that it will finally premiere in November and Mike Costa and Don Figueroa are building something really special with it. I don't think anyone has ever done the Transformers like this. It's a new direction and a new way to explore the themes that are core components to who these characters are.

It's really going to turn some heads. (Andy Schmidt)

I think it's a generational phenomenon... The original Transformers fans are now all grown up and have families who they've passed on the tradition to. Of course the proliferation of toys and now the huge feature films are keeping things going. (David Sobolov)

I think it's primarily a combination of two factors - the strength of the original concept of an alien race engaged in a civil war and the coolness of the toys - robots that transform from one form to another. (Bob Budiansky)

Easy - their essential humanity. That's what gets lost with the current giant-freakin'-robots-fighting mentality. Clank, clunk, thud, hiss; who cares? If that's all that blows your kilt up, go out and throw a garbage can at your car and get the same sounds. But when there are moral questions at stake, it's a different sack of annelids. Why are they fighting? What's right, what's wrong? Which is a little more right than wrong and how do

you wrestle with that? Where are the grey shades, and do you dare dip into them? That's when the humanity comes into play. The Autobots adopted humankind out of a moral sense, and in the show there were consequences. There were life-and-death struggles, and characters actually died. How you deal with that is a spiritual question. To put it another way, while the Transformers may have run on Energon... they were driven by the Allspark. (Mike McConnohie)

Great concept. Great execution. Superior voice acting. (Dan Gilvezan)

Well, they are the epitome of versatility - and they were already ready for the XXI century back in the '80. Just think about Chip Chase assuming control of a damaged Prowl via his PC in "Roll for it" ... Online gaming from the '80! (Guido Guidi)

Which Transformer best describes your personality?

Need you even ask? (It's a secret, but let's just say we both have a well-defined sense of self...) (Mike McConnohie)

Ultra Magnus from the animated movie. He's just a guy doing a job the best he can. He's also very loyal to his friends. I think that's pretty close to me, and if it's not, I wish it were... (Andy Schmidt)

I'd like to think there's a little me in every Transformer that I wrote - even Starscream! (Bob Budiansky)

Probably Rodimus Prime. (Guido Guidi)

What do you think of the live action movies?

They're explosive and action-packed. Good fun from start to finish. And let me tell you, when the first one came out my son was one week old to the day, but when Optimus Prime said, "One shall stand and one shall fall," that instantaneously out shined my son's birth as the best day of my life. (Andy Schmidt)

I've only seen the first one. I liked it quite a bit. It was a lot of fun. I thought it came

across as a really good issue of the kind of stories I was trying to write back in the 80's. (Bob Budiansky)

The CGI is remarkable. Plus, it's keeping the franchise alive. Thank you, Michael Bay! (Dan Gilvezan)

Spectacular action! (David Sobolov)

Not much. (See "essential humanity" above.) (Mike McConnohie)

There are some things I like and some that I don't, especially about some design's choices. But in the end I just enjoy them like a roller coaster ride, they are a lot of fun. (Guido Guidi)

Do you still have the same favourite characters now as you did when you first got involved with Transformers? What opinions have changed?

I thought then, and I still think that Chris Latta's Starscream is/was a brilliant creation. (Dan Gilvezan)

Yeah, I do, but I'm learning to like characters I didn't enjoy as much before. And I'm learning to like newer characters that I didn't even know. Check out LAST STAND OF THE WRECKERS to see some of them. (Andy Schmidt)

Well, I don't I've changed my mind about any favourite character in particular. They are still the same: Megatron and Optimus, Rodimus and Galvatron, Cyclonus, Starscream. But during these years I have added some new ones - like Beast Wars Dinobot, Megatron, Optimus Primal. (Guido Guidi)

What is your fondest memory of being involved with Transformers?

The Animated movie really heavily influenced what I believe good stories can and should do. Very moving when I was a kid and it made me understand that the giant robots were more than just toys. (Andy Schmidt)

Getting a fan letter from Stan Lee complimenting the "Decepticon Graffiti!"

story. That was pretty cool. During the time I was involved back in my Marvel days, I enjoyed almost all of the experience of working on the Transformers. I especially liked coming up with new names. That was a creative challenge that I found to be a lot of fun. (Bob Budioansky)

Sitting in the lobby with a bunch of the other actors, waiting to record, while the great Scatman Crothers sang, scatted and played the guitar! (Dan Gilvezan)

There's no single fondest memory; it was a wonderful time to be an animation actor, and when we worked we were all *acting* in the room at the same time. You could actually see and react to the other guys. These days for anime and video games it's just you and a microphone. Being able to lock eyes and work with people I revered like Peter Cullen and Frank Welker and John Stephenson and Alan Oppenheimer and so many more was an incredible experience. (Mike McConnohie)

Standing next to Scott McNeil while he performed Waspinator... If you loved his performance in the show, you should have heard it live 3 feet away! It was hard to keep from giggling into my microphone and ruining his takes. (David Sobolov)

What is your first memory of Transformers?

A friend gave me Bluestreak for my birthday one year. I hadn't heard of Transformers and I was instantly sucked into their world. (Andy Schmidt)

Since Beast Wars was my first exposure to Transformers, I'll tell you a story from the day I was cast as Depthcharge. I was the only one from the cast allowed to see what he looked like. They took me into a room separate from everyone else, showed me the image, then put it back in an envelope... top secret stuff! (David Sobolov)

Have you been to many Transformers conventions and if you have, what do you think of the fans?

Oh, I hate the fans. Just kidding. It was awesome to meet so many people at this year's Bot Con that loved the Transformers as much as me--and in some cases more than me. I hadn't paid much attention to them for several years and didn't even know about a lot of the stuff that had come out in my "absence." I'm having the best time catching up now though! (Andy Schmidt)

I've been to two. The fans are very nice. They're enthusiastic, and happy to meet me and have lots of questions that I try my best to answer. Unfortunately, they remember the stories I wrote a lot better than I do, so I'm not always able to answer every question. (Bob Budioansky)

I've only been to a few (including the most excellent Auto Assembly.) As far as Transformers fans go, I find them Fan-tastic! (Dan Gilvezan)

I've only been to one... lacon One in Indiana in 2006. The fans were incredibly sweet to me... I had a lot of the fans who came up for my autograph sign MY Beast Wars DVD package. (David Sobolov)

What is your favourite character to draw?

Are you talking Transformers? I don't have a favourite Transformer - each one is a headache to draw. Since I drew Ghost Rider for many years, I have a special fondness for drawing Ghost Rider. I didn't much care for drawing the motorcycle. (Bob Budioansky)

There're many - G1 Galvatron if I have to choose. (Guido Guidi)

Did you ever think that Transformers would be as popular as it is, back when you first got involved?

No. I thought that the toy, and its related properties like the comic book, would fade away after a few years like virtually every other toy ever created. I was wrong. I've kind of gotten used to it by now, but I still find it a bit surprising that I'm answering questions about work I did 25 years ago--like I'm doing in this interview! (Bob Budioansky)

Transformers was one of many shows I worked on at the time. I knew it was popular but I never knew it would have such long legs. (Dan Gilvezan)

How did you become a voice actor/why choose voice acting?

Purely by accident. I was at my agents office when I was first starting out as an actor and I saw a man in a little office off to the side. I poked my head into the office and said, "Hi! What do you do?" He said, "Voiceover." I said, "What's that? I could do it!" And Steve Tisherman became my first voiceover agent. (Dan Gilvezan)

While I was working doing theater in Vancouver, Canada I was introduced to an agent who specialized in marketing voice actors. My deep voice seemed well suited to working in animation and within a few years I was working on Beast Wars. (David Sobolov)

I sort of slid into voice acting; I'd been acting since early school days, educational theater, children's theater, civic theater, and so forth. However, when I joined the Marine Corps I did the one thing no military person is ever supposed to do: I volunteered... for the "Broadcast Specialist" job category. What that got me was a solid grounding in journalism, public affairs, radio and TV news, broadcast direction, film editing, you name it - pretty much anything to do with broadcast at the time. (Once I was even second banana to a magician on a kids' show.) Of course it also meant that while I was in Vietnam I was more-or-less a combat correspondent, which was *not* the most fun I've ever had. When I got out, I did radio in the U.S. midwest, the southwest, and eventually in Los Angeles. But what I really wanted to do was *act* again - and L.A. was the place to meld both aspects together. (Mike McConnohie)

Have there been any characters that you haven't enjoyed playing?

When I'm voicing a character, it means I'm working. And I ALWAYS enjoy my work. (Dan Gilvezan)

If you could choose any character who would choose to voice?

There's no one character I covet, but I especially enjoy the intelligent, 'delicious' villains. (David Sobolov)

I'd like to take another crack at Spider-Man, 30 years later. Hopefully, I've learned a thing or two about my craft! (Dan Gilvezan)

What has been the highlight of your career?

Spending 2 weeks shooting a couple of episodes of Diagnosis Murder with my idol Dick Van Dyke. (Dan Gilvezan)

Happily, I continue to have highlights... I love the variety this business offers. Playing Depthcharge was certainly one of those highlights. (David Sobolov)

What is your favourite character of the ones that you have played and why?

I'll always have a special place in my heart for the Transformers; Tracks and Cosmos are alter egos for me. I also had a character on G.I. Joe (Cross Country) who I thought at the time was as obnoxious a stereotyped characterization as I'd ever do in my career. (I was wrong, of course - there have been some since that I won't even *talk* about.) I've done a lot of original animation over the year, but by far my most challenging work has been in anime. Anime can be hyper-real, and the sheer labor of adjusting a performance to fit mouth movements drawn in another language, usually frame-accurate (that's 1/30 or a second in the US), watching the screen and looking at the dialogue and listening to the director while keeping an eye on the time code, *and* making the character real is the most difficult voiceover there is. Juggling all of that and making someone like Schwarzwald come alive in Big O is a huge challenge - but I *like* what I did with him. Insane, oh yeah! But he was *right*, and they wouldn't listen to him. Voicing D in the first Vampire Hunter D was a trip, because while he didn't say much, his demon left hand had a *lot* on its mind. I think you can see where I'm going with roles I liked... (Nota bene:

anyone who thinks "dubbed" equals "horrible" hasn't seen the right dubs.) (Mike McConnohie)

Has there been a voice that you have had difficulties playing?

Oh lord, yes; my poor innocent Cosmos heads that list. It's no secret he's loosely based on Peter Lorre (who was Hungarian), but with his rhythms and tones it's so very easy to slip into a bad Mexican accent. Any number of video games where it's all screaming and dying efforts; do that 'til you can taste blood, then try and sing tenor! My current nightmare is one of those cuts-both-ways deals. I'm fortunate enough to once again be voicing the Lich king in the online World of Warcraft game, but unfortunately I auditioned for him with a voice so unnatural that if I have an hour session voicing him, I'll lose my voice for two days. Guaranteed when that happens: someone will want me to do a nice smooth young voice for a food commercial. Aiiieeeee... (Mike McConnohie)

Have you ever had to cover for someone at the last minute, to finish a line or page, and had no-one realize?

In original animation, no; there's hardly anything *that* last-minute. It's a very easy thing to have an actor just pick up a missing or bobbled line at the next session. In a series or even a feature, there's almost always another session. (Except for the very last one, of course.) Understand, that doesn't mean it didn't happen from time to time... there are a great many of my compatriots who are absolute voice mutants and can sound like anybody, including each other, and happily do so for sheer fun - Wait, wait! I almost lied. I *did* cover for someone during a session of Visionaries: Knights of the Magical Light. I will not reveal the actor's name, but it happened that his line came up and he was distracted and wasn't paying as much attention as he should. The director (Wally Burr) had his face buried in the story boards. He didn't see what was going on and had a hand up waving wildly to cue the actor to speak, so I did the line as the other actor and the scene continued. Then when we did another take of the scene, the other guy was

back on track and did the line, and of course that was the take that got used - but yes, dang it! I *did* fill in and no one in the booth realized it. Ha! Haven't thought of that for a good many moons. [Insert: (HEAVY SIGH) "Good times..."] (Mike McConnohie)

What is the biggest challenge/project that you have taken on?

Heart of Steel, for the lot of redesigns and researches I did for the 19th century stuff. And All Hail Megatron, because of the large cast of characters. It was a bit hard to keep track of all those characters' redesigns. (Guido Guidi)

What artists inspired you in your career?

Too many! From animation Kazuo Nakamura, Floro Dery, Masami Ban, Masami Suda from comics/manga John Buscema, Mike Mignola, Derek Yaniger, William Johnson, Andrew Wildman, Go Nagai., Ken Ishikawa, Tetsuo Hara, Masamune Shirow, Masaomi Kanzaki, Hidetsugu Yoshioka, Yukito Kishiro. (Guido Guidi)

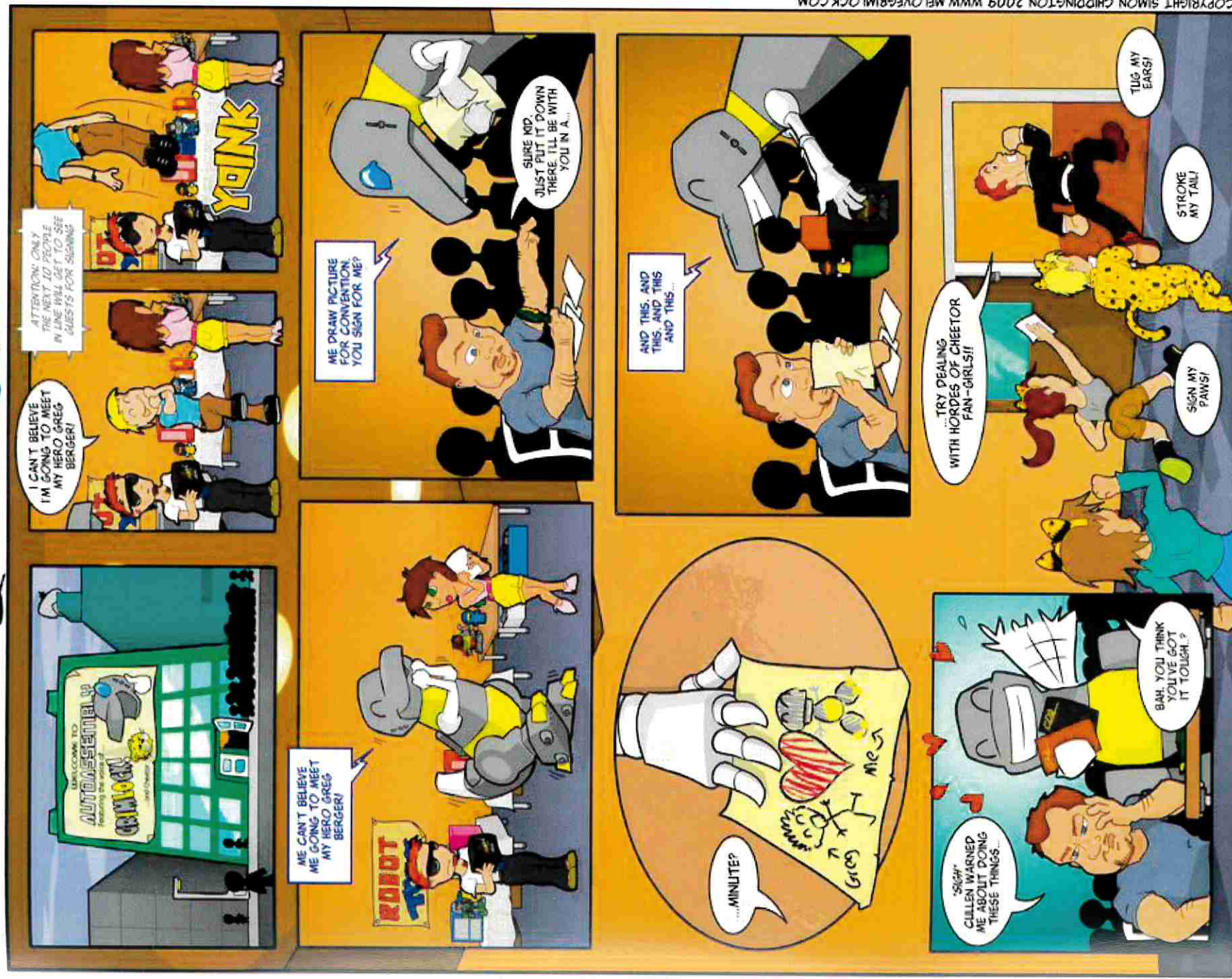
If you could meet one transformers personality (V/A, artist etc), who would it be?

Probably the TF movie producer Steven Spielberg! (Guido Guidi)

Thanks to everyone who was able to spare some time to take part in these mini-interviews.

Auto Assembly will be back in 2010...

ACCEPTANCE ASSEMBLY 2009



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