

# **REWRITING TRANSFORMERS 4**

## **OUTLINE**

**Disclaimer:** This outline is a work-in-progress, so some character moments and plot beats remain undeveloped or only roughly sketched. This outline shows where I originally planned to take my version of Episode 2. You are free to follow it, remix it, or ignore it entirely. Treat this as a prompt and a roadmap, not as a strict rulebook.

### **ACT 1:**

- **Prologue:** (don't forget to include that correction for the typo regarding the Prime War, the Missing 5 Primes, and the civil war from your TF 3 rewrite). This prologue will be narrated by one of two characters and you let me know which one you like more. It can either be narrated by Optimus like all of the past prologues in the Bayverse, or the prologue can be narrated by a different Prime instead. Perhaps Alpha Trion, Alchemist Prime, or some other member of the Thirteen. Let me know in the comment section down below which character makes the most sense as a narrator for this prologue about the Prime War. We open on a beautiful and lush prehistoric landscape. Text appears saying "Earth, Cretaceous Period". Throng of dinosaurs peacefully drink from tranquil waterfalls until they are suddenly disturbed by a beam of energy violently shooting into the sky, and the dinosaurs bolt away in fear. We see that the beam falters and fails before flickering out of existence. A wide shot reveals that the beam came from a half-assembled Star Harvester, where crews of Dreadbots labor under the harsh supervision of the Fallen. He berates his minions for their failed experiment, and one of the Dreadbots tries to explain to his master that the machine is not yet complete and requires more time before it can be fully operational. But the Fallen demands that the machine be finished sooner, stating that he cannot afford the luxury of patience since it will only be a matter of time before the Primes interfere with his work. As if on cue, an alarm is triggered and a Dreadbot reports that they are under attack. Similar to the prologue in *Thor: The Dark World* where we see the epic battle between the Asgardians and Dark Elves over the Aether, we see a massive army of Cybertronians emerging out of a space bridge and approaching the Star Harvester as they pause to observe the half-built doomsday device. At the head of the vanguard stands 6 tall figures. We see a young Optimus Prime – bearing the logo of the Elite Guard – standing somewhat meekly beside his master, Sentinel. Next to them stand the same 5 Primes that Optimus visited when he was in limbo during my *Transformers 2* rewrite. There's Alpha Trion, Mortilus Prime, Quintus Prime, Vector Prime, and the leader of the Thirteen Primes himself, the glorious and majestic Prima. The Fallen will slam his staff into the ground and summon his reserve forces that were hiding in the cracks of the earth down below. An entire horde of Dreadbots surge out onto the battlefield, snarling and roaring viciously like wild beasts, matching the Primes' numbers. The two armies crash together in a cataclysmic battle, devastating the tropical landscape as the powerful blasts from the Prime's weapons alone cause massive waves of damage. We see that the Prime's Energon-powered Artifacts – such as Optimus' Apex Axe and Sentinel's Star Saber – are basically weapons of mass destruction as they grant the Primes the powers of a god where each blow obliterates an entire company of soldiers (not unlike Sauron's mace from the Battle of Dagorlad from the *Lord of the Rings* prologue). There will be a brief shot where we see Optimus and Megatron fighting together side-by-side against the Dreadbot hordes. Here, we get to see quick glimpses of the other 5 Primes in action, using their own unique artifacts and powers before they fall one-by-one by the Fallen's hand. The Fallen

Prime of Lies will show no mercy as he seizes the Artifacts of his deceased brothers and sisters and likewise destroys them, declaring this to be the end of the Age of Primes and the beginning of a new era with the Fallen at its head. Before the Fallen can wrench the Matrix of Leadership from Prima's corpse, Optimus valiantly stands over his leader's body and defends it alone against the overwhelming might of the Fallen and his hordes. We see this younger and less confident Optimus fall for an amateurish mistake as the Fallen disarms him in a quick duel. But before he can finish Optimus off, a small group of metallic dinosaurs suddenly barrel their way through the Dreadbots' ranks and overpower the Fallen with their savage strength, distracting the evil overlord while a younger and less-scared Ironhide rushes forward. Ironhide provides covering fire long enough for Optimus to recover and get back on his feet. We can have a cameo or two as some more soldiers like Kup and Ultra Magnus swoop in to aid Ironhide, allowing the gruff warrior to attend to Optimus. He kneels in respect before the Prime and offers his axe back to him. Optimus looks at the reptilian reinforcements in confusion and Ironhide quickly explains that the Dinobots were a parting gift from Alchemist Prime before he left for the stars. They are shock troopers based off of the native creatures from Earth. Optimus nods and turns to Ironhide, "you have my thanks, soldier. Come! Let us finish this!". Ironhide reloads his cannons by pumping his arms and shouts out, "For Cybertron!", as he and Optimus charge back into the fray together and fight side-by-side in an epic, slow-motion killstreak. We then cut to the end of the battle where the Fallen lays before Sentinel and the Dinobots in defeat. Optimus will then present Prima's Matrix of Leadership to Sentinel, who humbly accepts and the rest of the surviving Cybertronian heroes will salute Sentinel Prime and kneel before him. The once green and lush valley where the battle took place has been burned to a barren wasteland of ash and fire, and Optimus bemoans this as he studies the ruined landscape and looks down at his own axe in dismay. He spots Ironhide and approaches the hero, who stands at attention and formally salutes the Prime. Optimus: "At ease, soldier. What is your name?" Ironhide: "Sergeant Ironhide, sir! Brukhov Brigade" Optimus holds his hand out and the two lock forearms. Optimus says that it was an honor to fight alongside Ironhide today and points out that he owes Ironhide a debt of gratitude for saving his life. The young Prime asks if there is anything he can grant the trooper in return, and Ironhide simply answers that he would like to have the honor of serving the Primes permanently as a full-time soldier. Optimus is confused as he remarks that Ironhide is already a soldier. Ironhide corrects Prime, informing him that he is actually a scrapyard worker who got enlisted into the Cybertronian military when the Prime War started. But Ironhide wishes for nothing more than to have the opportunity to work for the Primes directly. Optimus grants Ironhide's wish and officially names him a member of Optimus' unit – the Elite Guard – before we fade to black and cut to the film's title card.

- **Discovery:** The prologue transitions to the Arctic, where text appears saying, "Earth, 2014". We see crews of workers using equipment with the Hybrid Technologies logo on it to drill into the ice. They're looking for something. Their CEO, Mark Morgan (who will replace Joshua Joyce from the original film but still be played by Stanley Tucci), passes through security guards wearing snow gear that bears the E.D.C logo and his workers update them that the readings were incredibly faint at first but the deeper they've been digging, the stronger the signal has become. They're on the right track. They finally strike gold and pull up what they were looking for. It's the AllSpark. Morgan is thrilled and he reverently wipes the ice from the relic, admiring its raw power. Everyone stops working to look at it, even the guards. Morgan snaps out of his trance and tells the crew to hurry up and load the cargo ASAP. "History will remember this moment", Morgan says with an ambitious smile.

- **Exposition:** Carly (who has a makeover) going to the grocery store with her 12-year-old son Daniel. The two of them communicating using sign language. We get a glimpse of Carly's fake I.D. when the cashier asks to see it, and we see that Carly is now going by the name "Astoria Jablonsky". We see Carly getting nervous when they leave the store and see police officers breaking up a mob of pro-Autobot protestors in the parking lot, hurrying Daniel along before they draw any attention to themselves. On their way home, we see billboards of anti-Cybertronian propaganda such as "Hate Autobots" and "Remember D.C.". When they return home to Chip's ranch, Chip is meeting with a buyer for one of his horses (Chip will explain to the visitor that the ranch has been in the family for three generations) and we see him speaking Polish with Auggie, one of his ranch hands, whom more keen-eyed audiences will recognize as Spike disguised with long hair and a thick beard. Later that night, Daniel will be working on a math sheet from his homeschool work and Chip will finish hosting a virtual lecture with his online university class before joining the Witwickies at the dinner table. After dinner, the found family will then play a game together in the living room where a shrine for Sparkplug and the deceased Autobots is displayed. Daniel, out of curiosity, will ask about Wheeljack's memento and Chip will reminisce on the friendship he used to have with the Autobot scientist. Both of Daniel's parents remember seeing Wheeljack die with their own eyes as they join in on the story. The day Spike met the Autobots was the day everything changed, but the day Wheeljack and Mirage died was the day that the world changed again. And not for the better. After tucking Daniel into bed, Spike, Carly, and Chip stay up late and share a beer as Daniel's earlier questions prompt them the trio of heroes to reflect on their old lives and everything they've been through together. With Spike and his wife Carly expressing their heartfelt gratitude to Chip for sheltering them and giving them a home for all of these years. Especially when Spike found out Carly was pregnant with Daniel and they needed somewhere to lay low. Chip will say that it was the least he could do considering everything Spike and Carly sacrificed for humankind only for no one to know about it. Making them all unsung heroes. Chip adds that his resignation at NEST wasn't enough to clear him of his guilt. The scientist-turned-professor tells his friends that he respects them tremendously for not hiding the truth from their son and for raising Daniel with the values they all used to believe in and fight for when they were at NEST together.
- **Spike is Still the Comedic Relief:** Throughout the original *Transformers* trilogy, both within the Bayverse and my rewrites, Spike Witwicky has been the main protagonist but by nature of him being this awkward and quirky young adult, he very naturally fit into the role of the Comedic Relief. Which is something unusual to find outside of the comedy genre. And I'm not going to lie, Shia LaBeouf did an amazing job at portraying the type of Comedic Relief Michael Bay wanted him to play. The Bayverse version of Sam Witwicky is something that literally defines the entire atmosphere and tone of those films. In a lot of ways, Sam is the Bayverse incarnate. If that makes sense at all. Regardless, for my rewrites, I chose to keep Shia LaBeouf as my version of Spike Witwicky, and so by default he was still a source of comedic relief. But I personally envisioned this version of Spike to fulfill the Adorkable archetype. An Adorkable character is a type of character who, as the name implies, is both adorable and dorky. It is their wholesome enthusiasm combined with their vulnerability, their lack of social skills or cute little character ticks that make them so endearing and loveable. Some good examples of this Adorkable trope that you can reference to are Anna in *Frozen*, Bilbo in *The Hobbit*, Nicholas Hoult's portrayal of Beast in the *X-Men* movies, and Milo Thatch in *Atlantis*. Now, the point I want to make is that Spike, despite having gone through his coming-of-age character arc in my rewrites, will still fulfill the role of the comedic relief in this sequel trilogy, despite this sequel trilogy

being a bit darker and bleaker in tone. And here's how. Spike has grown out of the Adorkable phase and matured into not only being a partner and a protector, he's also evolved into a father, a husband, and a survivor. He and his family have been in hiding for 12 years, constantly looking over their shoulders, watching out for the government who has betrayed them and is hunting them down. Spike, like the rest of our returning protagonists, is a bit more jaded, bitter, and resentful than he was when the Autobots first showed up at his door. So, he's not going to be this cute little dork anymore. Instead, he's going to be what we call a Snark Knight, a character whose comedy comes from their dry and cynical sense of humor, their sarcastic jabs, and the petty banter and insults they exchange with the rest of the cast. If we were to look within the realm of *Transformers* by itself, *Transformers Prime*'s Arcee totally fits the bill as a Snark Knight. Just like Morrigan and Alistair from *Dragon Age*, or Obi-Wan Kenobi from the prequel era of *Star Wars*. All of that is to say that Spike Witwicky in this sequel trilogy will now fulfill the Action Hero and Snark Knight archetypes.

- **Ratchet's Death:** Meanwhile, in a derelict cruise ship in Mexico, the scene where Ratchet is hunted down and slain will play out exactly the same way that it does in the original film. Except Savoy will be replaced by Lennox and once Ratchet is wounded and cornered, Lennox tries to convince the medic to cooperate, insisting to his old ally that if he gives them the intel they need on the other Cybertronians fugitives, he will be spared. But Ratchet refuses to sell out any of his comrades, especially Optimus. "Is loyalty something worth dying for?", Lennox asks desperately. "The fact that you're even asking means you already have your answer", Ratchet replies weakly before Lockdown approaches them and says, "Autobots, Decepticons. Like little children, always fighting, making a mess out of the universe and I have got to clean it up...I remember you...". Ratchet coughs out, "Lockdown...". Lockdown then steps on top of Ratchet's wounds, leaning in and forcing a groan of pain out of him as he casually responds, "ahh the medic...Ratchet. It's been a long time since the Polyhex job. I hope you know you got off very very lucky that day. When most people see my face, they die", Lockdown boasts confidently. "Decepticon scum...", the medic growls. Lockdown snarls and jams a pick into another one of Ratchet's wounds, twisting it. "Aren't you supposed to be one of the smarter ones? You should know better by now, Autobot... I stopped playing your political games once I realized my talents could be more profitable elsewhere. Your politics mean as little to me as your life. So, I give you one last chance. Where is Optimus Prime? Where is the Matrix of Leadership?", the bounty hunter asks. "Why do you want the Matrix?", Ratchet coughs out. "Stop wasting my time and answer the question", Lockdown drawls as he twists his pick into Ratchet's wound a second time. "Never", Ratchet croaks. Lockdown chuckles, "then we have nothing more to discuss. I'm grateful to you, Ratchet. I get to clear my conscience now and clean up the one loose end that got away all those cycles ago". Lockdown reaches down and tears Ratchet's spark from his chest, which we can see disturbs Lennox. Swofford will contact Lennox over his comm as he watches the feed from the E.D.C's body cam and confronts Lennox on his reaction to Ratchet's death, questioning his display of sympathy for their enemies. We cut to Swofford standing in a surveillance room, surrounded by screens showing a live feed of the mission. Swofford's form is mostly concealed by shadows as he smokes from a cigarette and takes a step forward into the light. Swofford will replace Director Attinger from the original film, but he'll still be played by the excellent Kelsey Grammar. I want Swofford to look slightly less professional than the clean-cut Director Faireborn who preceded him, where we can tell the stress of the job is getting to Swofford as he is unshaven, his hair a little bit of a mess, and his suit has some wrinkles on it and his outfit is not exactly color coordinated perfectly. He's also going to be a very jaded and

cynical character, a veteran of multiple wars whose years as a black ops agent have taken their toll on him both emotionally and mentally, as the scars on his face would suggest. Lennox snaps back against Swofford's questions defensively and says that as a soldier himself, Swofford should understand how painful it is to kill a brother-in-arms. Swofford understands Lennox's history with the Autobots, which is why he was hired as Swofford's second-in-command in the first place. But he reminds Lennox that a true patriot would never consider a traitor to their cause a comrade, regardless of their history. "That was then, this is now. I need to know your head is in the right place, Colonel". "Yes sir", Lennox sighs heavily as he looks longingly at Ratchet's corpse and orders his men to load it up.

- **Lockdown's Characterization:** Essentially the Boba Fett of this *Transformers* sequel trilogy, Lockdown is a mercenary hired to be the Quintesson's emissary and his job is to hunt down the relics of the Thirteen Primes and return them to the Quintesson Court, who will offer a bonus for the capture of Optimus, Megatron or any other Prime or prominent Cybertronian leader. Lockdown has come to Earth specifically to retrieve the Matrix of Leadership and the AllSpark. Back on Cybertron, he was a freelance bounty hunter and criminal even before the outbreak of the civil war. He was willing to work for either side, but the Decepticons were the only ones who could afford to pay for mercenaries, so by default Lockdown worked mostly for Lord Megatron, which led to the common mistake that Lockdown was a Decepticon when in reality he never held any true loyalty to the faction or their cause. Lockdown's ambitions eventually motivated he and his crew to abandon the war and leave Cybertron for more profitable jobs. Lockdown earned himself the brand of traitor and deserter amongst the Decepticons, while holding the title of thief, murderer, and degenerate with the Primes and their Autobots, thus making him equally despised by all Cybertronian factions. Lockdown found more enjoyable work with other alien species offworld who offered him more cosmic contracts, and thus he was spared of Cybertron's exodus, and in all honesty, he couldn't have cared less. Despite his streak of profitable jobs and growing reputation, Lockdown will get annoyed whenever he has to correct someone on his true apathetic allegiance, as he's been reminding everyone that he is not a Decepticon for years. Another reason why he is so sick and tired of his own kind. Lockdown's ship, Omega Supreme, will be outfitted with a trophy room just like the Predators' ships from the *Predator* movies.
- **Call to Adventure:** A couple of days later, Daniel will be in the barn helping his dad work on an old truck, speaking to each other in Polish as Spike tests Daniel on his mechanic skills and has him help Spike diagnose what's wrong with the engine. Despite only being 12 years old, it's clear that Daniel is a very bright and intelligent kid, being adept at sign language, math, science, engines and robotics thanks to all of the different influences he had growing up. When Spike aka "Auggie" is called away to help Chip with a customer looking at a horse, Daniel's curiosity gets the better of him and he explores the rest of the barn, finding a secret trap door that leads to a huge garage underneath. He uncovers an old and rusted Peterbilt semi-truck that was covered up with a tarp and out of excitement, he pulls the tarp off and turns the truck on, accidentally activating it and freaking out when it transforms into Optimus Prime. Optimus, believing he is still in the middle of a pitched battle, lashes out, almost killing Daniel on accident before he realizes he is not in danger. He questions the frightened boy on his identity and how Optimus came to be here, just as Spike rushes in and begins panicking. Daniel ecstatically asks his dad why he never told them that Optimus was living under their basement this entire time?! He grew up on stories about heroes like Ironhide and Bumblebee, but he never thought he'd ever get to meet an actual Autobot! Not to mention the leader of the Autobots! It's like a little boy

finding out his favorite superhero is real. But instead of answering his questions, Spike yells at Daniel, reprimanding him before sending him back to the house, grounding him and warning him to never speak about what he just saw. Freaked out by his dad's unusual behavior, Daniel gets teary-eyed as he leaves, with Optimus reacting with confusion and asking his old friend how long it has been. Spike informs Optimus that it's been 12 years, but the danger that is hunting them is still out there. Optimus is safe for now beneath Chip's barn, but he begs Optimus to hurry up and go back into stasis before their enemies trace his signal, and their cover is blown. Nodding hesitantly, Optimus apologizes and complies, telling Spike it is good to know he is still alive and healthy before resuming his hibernation. Over dinner, the Witwickies and Chip sit Daniel down for a family talk as they explain how Chip found Optimus a couple of years ago in a scrapyard, significantly damaged and disguised as a rusty Peterbilt truck. Chip recognized Prime's disguise and bought him just so he could hide him beneath his barn. Spike spent a year repairing Optimus before hiding him in the barn's basement. The adults exposit to Daniel that after the Decepticons conquered the United States and killed the President in the Battle of Washington 12 years ago, the decommissioned NEST had been reformed by Earth's world leaders under the new title Earth Defense Command, E.D.C for short. Now, under their new director Gregory Swofford, E.D.C hunts down any Cybertronians they can get their hands on in the name of protecting humanity. Doesn't matter who they are. Autobots or Decepticons. None of them are safe. Any humans caught aiding Cybertronians are never heard from again. But so long as the Autobots remain offline and in stasis, E.D.C will be unable to trace them and find them. Spike stresses to his son that they owe it to the Autobots to help keep the alien fugitives safe after everything they sacrificed to protect their planet. Daniel recognizes how grave his error was and feeling extremely guilty, he apologizes. Daniel is excused to bed, but he stays up to eavesdrop on his parents having a stressful conversation with Chip in his study. They talk about contingency plans just in case they are compromised. Spike asks if the suits still work. Chip hopes they still do but reminds Spike that the suits haven't been used since they were last tested. Carly is worried about where they will go if they are exposed. She proposes the Witwickies leave the ranch just to avoid incriminating Chip. The professor insists that the Witwickies don't need to worry about him. Chip is an adult, and he knows what he signed up for. Daniel on the other hand, is an innocent child, and Chip would never forgive himself if anything were to happen to that boy. In the end, Chip supports Carly's wish to relocate their family just to play it safe. Perhaps they can even come back to the ranch if it turns out nothing ever comes of today's incident. Carly asks if Chip is still in contact with Headmaster and if he can help relocate them. Chip promises that he'll talk to Headmaster tonight and have arrangements made. Spike and Carly will then begin packing their bags. They unlock a safe hidden in their bedroom floor and unearth all of the old gear they kept from the Battle of Washington, like the grapple hook launcher Spike used to kill Ratbat, a handful of boomsticks, as well as the Geddis brothers' illegally modified guns. The couple will share a moment as they embrace, and they quietly comfort and reassure each other that everything is going to be alright. Spike promises he'll never let anything happen to her or Daniel, to which she replies that he doesn't have to worry about her. Carly has her husband to thank for teaching her how to defend herself and her loved ones. Spike isn't in this fight alone, and Spike whispers that he's lucky to have a wife and a fighter like Carly by his side as he kisses her forehead, and they continue packing.

- **Lockdown's Meeting with Swofford:** The meeting between Lockdown and Swofford aboard Lockdown's ship will remain the same way that it is in the film, except Lennox will be present for this meeting as well, serving as Swofford's escort along with a handful of

agents as bodyguards. In the original film, the name of Lockdown's ship was "the Knight's Temenos", but for this rewrite, we'll rename it to "Omega Supreme". We'll get more into that later in this rewrite. Swofford and his E.D.C assembly will wait outside Lockdown's ship until the hatch opens and a green, human-sized alien known as a Nebulon walks out to greet them. For those of you who don't know, the Nebulons were an alien species of mechanics, engineers and scientists from the original G1 show who became future allies of the Autobots through the Headmaster and Targetmaster projects. Collectively, all of the Nebulons fulfill the Smart Guy archetype in not just the original G1 show, but also in my rewrites as well. The E.D.C escort will stare at the new alien face before them with uncertainty. "What the Hell is that thing?", Swofford murmurs in disgust. The Nebulon speaks to the humans in a foreign language they can't understand, forcing the Nebulon guide to gesture for the visitors to follow him aboard the ship, where two of Lockdown's crew are playing holo chess. We see that Lockdown's crew is made up of 16-foot-tall armadillo-looking reptilian brutes known as Skuxxoids. The Skuxxoids are another alien species from G1 that are known for basically being hired guns, whether it be for assassinations, heists, saboteur jobs, or just simple mercenary work. These Skuxxoids that are in Lockdown's crew are bounty hunters specifically. When one of the Skuxxoids wins the chess match, the other one rage quits and punches his opponent in the face. The Nebulon guide calls up to the bounty hunters and they begin bullying the defenseless little Nebulon, cackling at him as they dismiss the slave to return to his post and resume his duties. One of the Skuxxoid hunters kneels down and studies their visitors closer. "These are the humans? They're so...ugly", one of the bounty hunters complains. "Looked in the mirror lately?", Lennox retorts with crossed arms. The two brigands will then take over as the humans' escort and lead their E.D.C visitors to the bridge, where Lockdown awaits them upon a throne-like chair, petting a pair of turbofoxes seated at his feet. The elephant-sized turbofoxes growl and snarl menacingly at the humans, putting them on edge until Lockdown reins his beasts by yanking on their leashes. Lockdown tells Swofford that he is pleased that this partnership has not been a waste of his time. When Lockdown first met Swofford, the deal was that he would deliver one dead Cybertronian in exchange for one Cybertronian relic each. Lockdown has already kept his end of the bargain. He's found and slain one Autobot. Now, it's time for the humans to deliver a relic. In response, Swofford has his bodyguards drop a crate at the foot of Lockdown's throne and open it, revealing the Fallen's Staff to be inside. "Why do your employers want these relics so bad?", Swofford declares boldly. "Call it a collection", Lockdown leers as he picks up the Staff and admires it. Lockdown's intel has informed him that at least 4 more relics are hidden somewhere on Earth, including the Star Saber, the Apex Axe, the Matrix of Leadership, and the AllSpark. Lockdown knows the humans have found the AllSpark and asks why it has not been delivered to him yet. "I may not be a Decepticon...but I know foul play when I smell it", he declares in a threatening tone. Swofford's excuse is that the AllSpark must be processed by his superiors before he can hand over the relic. Lockdown replies that he will not tolerate bureaucracy, clarifying that he is not some pawn in Swofford's schemes that he can toy with. Lockdown threatens that Swofford has a week to deliver the AllSpark to him or else the deal is off and Swofford will pay with his life. Once the meeting is over and they are off the ship, Swofford reveals in confidence to Lennox that he has no intention of ever letting any Cybertronian get their hands on a Cybertronian superweapon again. "Then why did we just give him the Staff?", Lennox asks. Swofford replies that the Staff is powerless in the bounty hunter's hands. Since he's not a Prime, the Staff is reduced to just being giant glow stick. Swofford adds that Lockdown is just a means to an end for E.D.C's plans, and once the bounty hunter has served his purpose,

they'll add him to the scrap heap just like the others. But if Lockdown continues to be unmanageable before the job is done, then the E.D.C will just have to kill Lockdown earlier than intended and continue hunting down the Autobots on their own. In the meantime, Swofford orders Lennox to take a squad and go to Texas. They picked up some large Energon readings there and he wants Lennox to confirm whether the source is a relic or a Cybertronian. Either way, Swofford wants it brought to him ASAP.

- **Inciting Incident:** Lennox and an E.D.C squad show up at Chip's ranch having detected Optimus' signal from when he temporarily awoke from stasis. Lennox is met with nothing but hostility from Chip, who has lost all respect for his former comrade. The two exchange words as Lennox questions his old friend on the readings they found. Even though it offends Chip, Lennox apologizes and insists that his men are going to have to search the property just to be sure that Chip's alibi holds up. Carly signs for Daniel to stay inside the house and when she steps in front of the E.D.C troopers trying to get in through the house's front door, it leads to a standoff. The agents try to forcefully push her out of the way, but Carly takes the men by surprise when she disables them using hand-to-hand combat techniques Spike taught her. The rest of the soldiers dogpile Carly and pin her down and Lennox notes that he recognizes the takedowns as N.E.S.T techniques they used to train their recruits in. After a moment, he sees through Carly's disguise and asks her where Spike is. In response, Spike walks out of the barn, menacingly walking towards Lennox with his arms outstretched, challenging his former friend and asking Lennox if he's here to arrest them. Because if he's not, then Lennox better get ready for a fight because nobody lays hands on Spike's wife without suffering the consequences. Two E.D.C troops hold Spike at gunpoint, but he doesn't stop and gets into a fistfight with them nonetheless before Lennox stops him by firing a warning shot near Spike's head. It's game over as Chip and the Witwicky family are surrounded with guns trained on them. They're suddenly interrupted by the Energon detectors on the E.D.C. troopers' belts begin blaring frantically like an alarm. There's just been a huge surge of Energon in the area. Following the signal, Lennox orders his men to go check out the barn, only for the floor of the barn to suddenly explode in a burst of debris as Optimus Prime leaps out of the underground bunker to join in the fray. Just like in the original film, he crashes through the barn's walls and with a few well-timed and well-placed shots of his ion cannon, turns the tables back into the Witwicky's favor. The E.D.C troops who dodged Optimus' first attack are sent packing as they narrowly avoid the rampaging titan, allowing Chip and the Witwickies to free themselves. Optimus will pause when he spots Lennox, an expression of confusion and hurt overcoming him, "Colonel?...You're...with them?", he asks. Lennox nervously raises his hands in surrender and drops down on one knee, repeating the same spiel he gave Ratchet where he apologizes to Optimus and tries to get him to cooperate and turn himself in by appealing to their past friendship. As Lennox talks, we see a black Lamborghini appear in the distance. With everyone's attention at the ranch being diverted to Optimus, the black lambo transforms into Lockdown. Climbing atop a silo, Lockdown uses the scanner on his mask to quietly study the interaction. At the ranch, Optimus' anger rises with each word that comes out of Lennox's mouth. Fuming, the Prime finally cuts off the traitor's rambling with his own warning shot in front of Lennox which propels the Colonel onto his back. Optimus kneels intimidatingly over Lennox and gets in his face (credit goes to A.G.O.M. Productions for this one), "do you know how many of my brothers and sisters gave their lives for you?! How many of my friends died saving humanity?!...well no more". He grabs Lennox and lifts him up in the air, only for Lockdown to fire rockets from his missile launchers and strike Prime. The tables have turned once again as Optimus drops Lennox and turns to find Lockdown hovering over them with a jetpack. The bounty hunter smugly

reaches behind him and draws out the Fallen's Staff. "Lockdown", Optimus growls with recognition, "where did you get that?". Lockdown chuckles, "Honestly, Prime. There's nothing you can hide that I can't find. Now let's make this easy. Hand over all of your little trinkets, and I won't have to make a mess". Optimus draws out both his axe and the Star Saber.

- **Chip's Death:** "Right. Let's get dirty", Lockdown says with a smirk as he flies down and engages Optimus in a duel. Carly grabs her son, and they bolt inside the house. She goes into a room and activates a secret switch that reveals a hidden chamber, uncovering a row of human-sized mech suits that are clearly based off of Cybertronian tech. Daniel is in awe as his mom hurries him inside one of the suits and starts giving him directions on how to pilot it. Spike suddenly runs in and seeing that his family is safe, he rushes to his bedroom and begins grabbing all of his old gear. With his Cybertronian weapons in hand, Spike sprints back to his family but is unexpectedly buried beneath the collapsing roof as Chip's ranchhouse becomes collateral damage in Optimus' duel with Lockdown. Spike hits his head as he goes down and passes out into unconsciousness as we fade to black. We fade back in through Spike's POV as he groggily wakes up to see Carly and Daniel in their mech suits, pleading for him to wake up. Outside, Lennox picks Chip up out of his wheelchair and tries to carry him away from the crossfire between Optimus and Lockdown's fight. But a stray shot blows Lennox off his feet, sending both he and Chip sprawling in two different directions. Lennox is likewise knocked out but is carried to safety by his men, leaving Chip alone and stranded. The professor tries army crawling towards the wreckage of his house, grumbling aloud as he encourages himself to keep going just as the Witwickies burst through the debris in their mech suits and begin flying upwards. Lockdown lobs one of his terraforming grenades at Optimus, misses, and the grenade goes off next to Chip. Wrestling with Lockdown, Optimus calls out to Spike and Spike realizes too late the peril Chip is in. Spike immediately U-turns back to the ground to save his friend, reaching out to him to take Chip's outstretched hand. But he's too late. Chip gets caught in the crossfire and the professor is consumed by the explosive wave of metal that transforms Chip into a petrified corpse frozen and embalmed in metal. Spike looks on in horror until Optimus roars with uncontained fury and finally decides to activate in the Energon in both the Axe and the Star Saber as the two weapons begin to burn with intense light. With a mighty swing, Optimus discharges a large blast of Energon that blows Lockdown miles away, leaving a long streak of burnt fields and destruction in its wake. It looks like a massive meteor just cut through the land. This is a level of obliteration that we haven't seen before by these Energon weapons and we can see Optimus momentarily hesitate with regret. Optimus calls Spike away from the battlefield, apologizing but insisting that they can't stay as the Prime transforms into a truck and speeds away.
- **Lockdown's Promise:** Once Optimus and the Witwickies are far away from Chip's ranch, Lockdown wakes up aboard his ship, Omega Supreme, to find himself severely wounded after he had been recovered by his Skuxxoid crew. He's currently missing his right arm and his left leg and there's a lot of Energon leaking. The Nebulon slaves are feverishly operating on Lockdown and when the Skuxxoids report that the targets got away, Lockdown snarls in frustration and swats the Nebulons off of him. He limps to the bridge to find that they are still hovering over the ruins of Chip's farm, hiding amongst the clouds. Down on the ground lies Chip's metal statue, his mouth wide with terror as he died midscream with his hand outstretched, hoping for salvation. Lockdown scowls as he takes the controls and fires a blast from the ship's cannon down onto the ground, dematerializing Chip's statue in a moment of pettiness as he angrily commands his crew to get on the scanners and find Prime!

- **Autobots Reunited:** On the road, Optimus will send out an encrypted emergency S.O.S to all Cybertronians to meet him at the coordinates he provides, finishing his message with, “we are all targets now”. Using their jetpacks in the mech suits, the Witwickies follow Optimus to a deep canyon. Optimus and the Witwickies share cheerful reunions with Arcee, Ironhide, and Steeljaw, who are already waiting for them. Daniel is fascinated with Steeljaw as the two begin playfully roughhousing with one another, Daniel’s mech suit keeping him safe from the rhino-sized Cybertronian’s teeth and claws. “Who’s the stowaway?”, Arcee asks, gesturing towards Daniel. Ironhide shrugs, “He’s obviously not afraid of being eaten alive”. Spike proudly introduces his son Daniel to the Autobots and Ironhide boisterously booms with pride that once he’s through seeing to Daniel’s training, the boy will become a damn good soldier. “I don’t know...what do you think, Ironhide? Do you think he has it in him to be a Wrecker someday”, suggests Carly. Ironhide’s mood grows solemn, and he looks crestfallen as he sadly answers that the Wreckers can never be replaced. We can tell that Carly instantly regrets her comment. The topic of the conversation is changed as the humans notice with surprise that Shockwave is also in attendance, dropping down from a cliff where he was previously keeping watch. “Oh great, he’s still alive”, Spike grumbles under his breath as he sees the leader of the Decepticons and the current mood of happiness is ruined. “Where are the rest of the Decepticons?”, Carly whispers to her husband. “Terminated”, Shockwave answers bluntly, “by the hands of your kind...I am all that is left.” Spike gets emotional when he sees Bumblebee crest over a hill and come into view. He ecstatically rushes forward and leaps up, wrapping his arms around Bee’s head as Spike gets a little teary-eyed and admits how relieved he is to see Bee is still around. All eyes are drawn to a new face amongst them as another Autobot in car mode appears not far behind Bumblebee. The Autobot is a red Ford GT with orange racing stripes and a custom flame paint job. The bot transforms and awkwardly introduces himself as Hot Rod. The only one who recognizes Hot Rod is Bee, who remembers Hot Rod as a fellow scout back on the War for Cybertron. (For the role of Hot Rod, I wanted to cast someone who not only sounded young and could pull off that “rebel without a cause” personality, but also an actor who could realistically mesh well with this cast and was somewhat relevant during the 2010s. So, I settled on Ashton Kutcher as the voice actor for this version of Hot Rod in my rewrites.) Hot Rod is completely speechless to find himself in the presence of the legendary Optimus Prime himself, and he stammers as he expresses to the Last Prime just how much of an honor it is to meet him. Bee asks how and when Hot Rod got to Earth. The scout replies that his pod was shot down after he got into a dogfight with some bounty hunters he ran into on Antares 3. Evidently, they didn’t like being cheated out of a game of gambling. Hot Rod was heading to Earth anyways because he picked up a transmission from Optimus inviting all Autobots refugees to meet him at his base on Earth. It turns out that it was a trap as a bunch of humans were waiting for Hot Rod and they shot his pod down. But Hot Rod managed to escape, getting a little cocky and full of himself as he tells the story. Nobody is impressed, and so Hot Rod goes on to explain that he went underground after decrypting Optimus’ second message warning all Cybertronians to stay away from Earth. Everyone present realizes that E.D.C has been transmitting Optimus’ old message from the TF1 rewrite to lure unsuspecting Autobots to the slaughter. Who knows how many bots and cons have fallen for that trap? Hot Rod is questioned on the location and status of his pod. The Autobot scout shrugs carelessly and admits it must have been either been destroyed or confiscated by the humans after he made a run for it. A glimmer of hope appears in Optimus’ eyes as he suggests that if they are able to find the pod, they may be able to fly themselves one at a time to another world where they can find a bigger ship that will fly them to a new

home. The momentary boost of morale within the Autobots is forgotten when Optimus notices that they are all in need of repairs and calls out for Ratchet, only for silence to answer. They all become concerned when they realize Ratchet is not among them and nobody is able to get a trace on his signal. But as Bee points out, that could be a really good sign. It could mean Ratchet is so well-hidden he can't even receive their signal. Optimus nods reluctantly, and says in a doubtful voice, "yes...you must be right".

- **Five-Man Band:** So, for this rewrite, our Five-Man Band of Autobots will consist of Optimus as the Charismatic Leader who is going through a crisis in faith, Bumblebee as the Lancer who will second guess and question Optimus' morally-compromised decisions, with Shockwave as the coldhearted and logical scientist who will replace Ratchet as the Smart Guy. Ironhide will continue his tenure as the boisterous Big Guy by being the team's weapons specialist, Arcee will serve as the Chick since she is the only FemBot left amongst the Autobots, and Hot Rod will be the Sixth Ranger as the new recruit who joins an already established ensemble, with Steeljaw serving as the token Team Pet that is more of an accessory than an actual character. I want to take a moment to explain why I chose this unconventional roster as opposed to sticking with the original Five-Man Band of Autobots from *Age of Extinction*. There's actually two reasons for this. The first reason is for consistency's sake and remaining true to the previous character roster I had already set up in my *Transformers 3* rewrite. As you may have noticed, I swapped out Hound, Crosshairs, and Drift with Ironhide, Shockwave, and Arcee. I did this because it was just a natural way to progress the story *Age of Extinction* was trying to tell and it didn't make a whole lot of sense to reinvent the wheel and kill off established characters who already fulfill these roles perfectly fine and start from scratch by replacing them with completely new characters. That's just extra work that isn't justified at all. As a writer, you're creating more work for yourself because now you have to get the audience to care about 3 brand new characters who will ultimately always be compared with their predecessors. Not to bash on *Age of Extinction*'s new Autobot cast, but there really wasn't anything Hound did in the sequel trilogy that Ironhide couldn't have done, and I think that applies across the board with all of the original characters and their replacements. There's no point in fixing something that isn't broken so that's why I selected this roster for my rewrite. Aside from trying to hammer home that the Autobots are facing extinction, it didn't make sense to me to replace Dino and Sideswipe with Crosshairs and Drift. Hound makes sense because you would need another heavy hitter like Hound to take Ironhide's spot as the Big Guy on the team. I personally would've used Warpath considering Bayverse Hound basically has G1 Warpath's personality instead of G1 Hound's personality. But, as a Bayverse fan, I honestly think the film would've benefitted from keeping Dino and Sideswipe on the team just so the audience can have some consistency with this constantly rotating cast of Autobots. That being said, at the end of the day, it's tomato tomato whether Dino and Sideswipe returned because just like their replacements, they didn't have a huge impact on the film's plot and were easily replaceable. I also technically broke one of my own rules that I set for myself on this channel by adding a brand-new CGI character to this film's budget who didn't exist in the original film(s) in the form of Hot Rod. But that's because I have something very special in mind for both Shockwave and Hot Rod and how their fates are going to contribute to the overall plot of the sequel trilogy.
- **Lennox is Reprimanded:** We cut back to Chip's ranch. Lennox is greatly distressed by the death of his old friend, and later when Swofford is questioning Lennox's loyalty, the colonel unloads all of his pent-up grief over Chip on his superior officer, unable to contain his rage. In response, Swofford benches Lennox the next time they go out onto the field.

- **Chip's Funeral/Optimus' Lie & Ghost:** That night, while taking shelter in a cavern deep underground with the Autobots illuminating their dark hideout with their headlights, the Witwickies and the Autobots will host a funeral for Chip. Optimus offers his deepest sympathies to the Witwickies as he projects a hologram of a selfie Chip took with Optimus when the two first met at N.E.S.T. Optimus updates the rest of the Autobots of Chip's selfless actions in sheltering not only the Witwickies but also Optimus himself within his home all these years, doing his best to protect them all despite his impairments. Chip may have had a broken body, but his spirit was always steadfast and unyielding. Even in the face of paralysis, Chip never gave up or succumbed to despair. A quality Prime admires tremendously. Optimus adds that he personally owes Chip a debt of gratitude that he can never repay but will continue to fight in his memory and vows to not let his sacrifice be in vain. Optimus informs them all that even though they don't require sleep, the humans do, and he wants the Cybertronians to rotate shifts for watch duty before he walks away, stating that their enemies are still out there hunting for them, and he needs a moment to strategize and plan with his second-in-command, Ironhide. Similar to the squabble Bee and Drift have in the original film, Hot Rod will act like a high school jock with a chip on his shoulder and will pick a fight with Bumblebee when the sergeant gives the young scout the first watch. Hot Rod, being the snarky and disrespectful punk that he is, arrogantly asks why he has to listen to Bee. They're both the same rank. Bee enlightens Hot Rod that he was promoted to sergeant after temporarily leading the Autobots while Optimus was in stasis. "Really? I mean, no offense, but they put you in charge? Man, you guys must blow without Optimus around", Hot Rod comments. Bee warns Hot Rod to watch his mouth, but Hot Rod keeps going, recounting to everyone a story of when Bee made an embarrassing and humiliating mistake a long time ago when the two scouts went through boot camp together. This leads to a brawl between the two scouts that not only wakes the Witwickies up, but also requires Ironhide to come and break up. Once the two are separated, Optimus returns and sternly reprimands both Bee and Hot Rod for their childlike immaturity. Hot Rod shamefully submits to Optimus' orders and drives off to go stand watch. While Arcee consoles Bee, Ironhide tells Prime in confidence that Hot Rod was to blame for the incident. Nonetheless, Optimus expects more out of his officers. All leaders must be held to a higher standard. Ironhide confesses that everyone at camp is on edge right now, and he can't blame them given their current circumstances. Optimus admits that things are looking bleak right now. They're stranded on Earth without a ship, they're being hunted from all corners by their former allies who have not only turned on them but also have access to Cybertronian tech, and not to mention, they are all low on both Energon and ammunition. Everyone in the camp has injuries big and small. Shockwave's cannon arm transforms into a welding blowtorch as he unsuccessfully attempts to patch himself and the others up. But it's useless since he doesn't have access to quality parts. He just has pieces of rusted scrap metal that he fuses over the holes in everyone's armor, admitting that Ratchet would be better suited for this task. Everyone in the group is literally falling apart. This is a new low for the Autobots. Their morale is almost gone, and their spirits are broken. Most of that is attributed to Optimus' own crisis of faith he is having. Optimus shares with Ironhide the reason why the Primes didn't allow Optimus to die back during the *Transformers 2* rewrite. It was because Optimus was destined to restore Cybertron before he could be allowed to rest and become one with the AllSpark. But Optimus has lost all faith in himself and his ability to succeed. This is the Lie of his character arc. Optimus feels like he is a failure who is unfit to lead the Autobots, repeating the same line that Sentinel told him back in the *Transformers 3* rewrite when his old mentor had turned traitor. This is the Ghost that supports the Lie. Optimus believes that the Autobots wouldn't

be in their current circumstance if it wasn't for Prime's own poor choices and bad judgement calls. They're no closer to restoring Cybertron. In fact, they are even worse off than they've previously ever been. Optimus is now second-guessing himself in destroying Sentinel's space bridge and whether it was the right call or not. Ironhide asks if the AllSpark is secure, and Optimus promises that he has hidden it in a safe location. Ironhide then proceeds to give his old friend a pep talk, reminding him of all the good that Optimus has brought to their people and how, even through his failures, Primus has managed to bring goodness out of it and ensure the Autobots' survival. Ironhide reminds Optimus that as leader of the Autobots, his attitude is what sets the tone for the rest of the team. So the fact that he is in a bad spot mentally, emotionally and spiritually means the rest of his team is also. The old veteran tells Optimus to shape up and at least put on a brave face in front of the others so that they don't fall into complete despair. Optimus thanks Ironhide for his counsel and the two lock forearms in a brotherly handshake.

## ACT 2A:

- **Spike is the Action Hero archetype:** In the original trilogy, Spike was portrayed as an Action Survivor, an archetype where a character is completely inexperienced in heroics, fighting, and adventuring and barely survives the action that takes place in the story through the mere skin of their teeth. Usually only making it out alive because they are either very creative and resourceful, or they are incredibly lucky, or because they adapt and grow into the Action Hero archetype. After his character arc in our rewrite of *Transformers 3*, Spike will have made that transition from being the Action Survivor to being the Action Hero of the franchise. One of the things I really liked about *The Last Knight* was how Cade was portrayed as this badass vigilante/freedom fighter who lived in hiding with the Autobots and fought with them side-by-side against any Cybertronian or human threats before returning back to their hideout Robin Hood-style. Cade Yeager totally fits the bill as a Michael Bay Action Hero, and I want Spike to fill that role for this rewrite of the Bayverse sequel trilogy. In the 12 years that we skipped over in our time jump, Spike has become a much more rugged and weathered person. Living as a fugitive, cut off from his old life, and constantly looking over his shoulder and worrying about his family has worn Spike out. When we are reintroduced to him in *Transformers 4*, he's much rougher around the edges than we remember him. He's a bit more pessimistic than he was when he was younger, but he also has his wife and son, as well as Chip, to keep his faith grounded. After the E.D.C. invades Chip's ranch, Spike will retrieve one of the Geddiss brothers guns that he used in the Battle of Washington, as well as some military-grade firearms that he managed to get his hands on. Probably through the black market thanks to Chip. Spike will also cut his hair short to its previous length and trim his beard. He shouldn't be clean-shaven anymore in this sequel trilogy. Even though it is a thing of the past to have modern day action heroes grow moustaches, I think Shia LaBeouf being the living meme and trend-setter that he is could've pulled off an action hero moustache for this movie. If not, we could've just had the sequel trilogy version of Spike follow the 2010s trend of having male protagonists sport full beards. Either way, Spike still has his facial hair in this rewrite.
- **The Tour:** Swofford will visit Morgan at Hybrid Technologies headquarters to inspect the progress of the army Morgan promised him as per the terms of their partnership. Swofford used E.D.C.'s resources to help Morgan find the AllSpark, and in return, Hybrid Technologies builds the American government its own private army of Transformers. Morgan insists that he has held up his end of the bargain as Dr. Fujiyama, Hybrid's lead scientist, leads them on a tour through the facility. Since Ken Watanabe was already a member of this film's original cast, I would keep him for this rewrite but cast him as Dr.

Fujiyama. Morgan and Fujiyama will show off the Nightbird and Insecticon models for stealth and infiltration, the Combaticons that can combine into Bruticus as their ground force and heavy infantry, and finally, their Cyclonus and Sweeps models as their air support. The Sweeps will be Hybrid's answer to the Seekers and Nightbird will replace Stinger from the original film. Unlike Morgan, Dr. Fujiyama respects and admires the Cybertronians, and does not harbor any hatred towards the Autobots like most humans. Like his G1 counterpart, Dr. Fujiyama will reveal that the Nightbird model was his design and personal achievement. He replaces Su Yeming in the film and helps liaison with the Chinese factory Hybrid Technologies uses to build the artificial Transformers. Morgan then shows the battered Soundwave to Swofford, explaining that the crippled Decepticon has been translating all of the data from the AllSpark and helping them create this new wave of Cybertronians through Soundwave's knowledge of Cybertronian biology. Essentially, Soundwave replaced Brains and assumed his role from the original film. All that is left of Soundwave is his head and a portion of his chest that is suspended in a tank with tubes plugged into him. Hybrid Technologies' latest project shows the most promise though. A prototype they are calling Galvatron. They are hoping that this Galvatron model can be Earth's answer to Optimus Prime and serve as the champion of Hybrid Technologies' army. As Morgan puts it, "this is the face of America's new hero!" Compelled by his curiosity, Swofford will ask Fujiyama what fuel he is using for his Transformers since all of the Energon refineries were shut down after Autobot Alien Cooperation Act was repealed. As his answer, Dr. Fujiyama leads his guests to another area of the factory where pools of green liquid swirl in vats. Morgan reveals that they've created a synthetic form of Energon to power their robots, hence the unusual green color of the synthetic Energon and why their bots have green eyes. Morgan makes a quick sidenote warning to Swofford that he's already trademarked and patented the synthetic Energon just in case his government buddies get any ideas about using it. As Morgan says, "green is the color of the Earth, and that's what we're here for. To protect her". Swofford raises an eyebrow skeptically as he takes another puff from his cigarette, "is that so?". Morgan will smile smugly as he recites his company's slogan, "we make the world". Quick side note, in *Age of Extinction*, the metal that the Cybertronians is made out of is referred to as "Transformium". But for this rewrite, the metal will instead be referred to as "Trilithium".

- **Shockwave's Past:** While Carly is staking out Hybrid Technologies, everyone will avoid standing too close to Shockwave, giving him glares of disgust. Daniel notices this and he curiously approaches the Decepticon scientist, inquiring about Shockwave's unique appearance and lack of personality in comparison to the rest of the Cybertronians. In a flat and unemotional voice, Shockwave will reveal that his modified form and mannerisms are a result of being a prisoner of war and a victim of torture. During the Prime War, Shockwave had been a scientist and a strategist under the Primes, and his excellent battle plans and tactics had cost the Fallen several crippling defeats, earning the hatred of the Prime of Lies. One day, Shockwave found himself captured by the Fallen's Dreadbots. When Shockwave refused to betray his allies and give up any valuable intelligence, he was tortured and subjected to a process known as Empurata. When Daniel asks what Empurata is, Shockwave will answer that it is an ancient punishment on Cybertron reserved for criminals where the criminal's hands and heads are surgically removed and replaced with new deformed heads and fingerless prosthetics so that everyone would know to shun the criminal. Over time, Empurata was deemed an unethical practice and outlawed across all of Cybertron, but there were those who still practiced the old tradition in secret, such as the Fallen and his henchmen. By the time the Primes came to rescue Shockwave, it was too late. Shockwave's face had had been replaced with a monstrous cyclopean head with

fangs and horns, his hands had been replaced with claws, and the emotional centers of his circuitry had been cut out, permanently changing his entire personality, and turning Shockwave into an emotionless husk. Daniel will comment on how horrible that experience must have been for Shockwave, but the Decepticon scientist will reply that the modifications have provided him with a deeper clarity than he ever had before. He's no longer held back by emotions such as guilt, pity, fear or even love. He can achieve whatever scientific breakthrough he wants without fear of a conscience holding him back. Optimus will shake his head at hearing this, and state that he regrets not being able to save Shockwave in time, but Arcee vehemently insists that Shockwave doesn't deserve Optimus' pity. The Witwickies will become taken back by this sudden spite from Arcee, and in a voice shaken with grief and passion, Arcee will inform the humans that after the Prime War, Shockwave began kidnapping and experimenting on the female Cybertronians because he found their evolution to be a fascinating development. Because of Shockwave, many bots from Arcee's colony were brutalized and traumatized beyond repair, which is why Arcee is the last of her kind. Shockwave offers no apology because all of the horrors he enacted on the female bots was for the sake of science and progress. Any practical being could recognize the logical necessity behind Shockwave's actions. Shockwave will add that he had been arrested for his crimes, but when the civil war between the Autobots and Decepticons started, Megatron freed Shockwave from prison in exchange for his scientific genius, and he restored Shockwave's mangled limbs with regular arms and hands, but Shockwave requested that his right arm be replaced with an ion cannon since he deemed it would be more practical in the upcoming conflict, much to Arcee's disgust. When Arcee insults Shockwave and tells him that he doesn't deserve to live after all the evil he's done. Shockwave will then tell her, "All life is equal. I merely assign it a quantifiable value...zero". Arcee screams, "Well since your life is so meaningless, I'll do you the favor of ending it!". Arcee will launch herself at Shockwave, but Bumblebee will hold her back and Optimus will intervene and break up the fight.

- **Carly Goes Undercover:** Out of the three humans in the Witwicky family, it is decided that Carly has the best chance of remaining undetected thanks to her makeover. So, she takes Cade's place in the original film as the spy who sneaks into Hybrid Technologies to locate Hot Rod's ship. Shockwave will orchestrate a plan for the team, generating a holographic schematic of Hybrid's HQ as he explains the strategy to them. Carly and Daniel will pose as car dealers who are bringing in a vehicle for scanning. They will drive Hot Rod into the building's garage, and from there they will split up. Daniel will stay with Hot Rod in the garage while Carly will disguise herself as a scientist and sneak into the lab. Shockwave will provide Carly with a pair of glasses that are basically like Smart Glasses since Shockwave has modified them to have micro cameras installed inside of them that feeds directly to Hot Rod. By being Hot Rod's eyes, Carly will help Hot Rod locate his pod. Once they confirm the ship's location, Carly will discard her disguise, return to Daniel and Hot Rod in the garage, and then rendezvous with the rest of the team in the parking garage for Hybrid's employees. From there, they will all wait for the cover of night so that the entire Autobot team can disable security, sneak in, and steal Hot Rod's pod before anyone knows what is happening. Thankfully, Hybrid Technologies is not equipped with any Energon detectors like most E.D.C. facilities. Shockwave hypothesizes that Hybrid must be manufacturing their own Energon, hence the need to remove the sensors. This forces Spike to stay behind with the rest of the Autobots while Carly, Daniel and Hot Rod execute the mission. Both Spike and Bee will be anxious, worried that their respective teammates will be harmed. Spike will nervously bounce his leg as he sits inside Bee, prompting his old friend to reassure him in an attempt to ease his nerves. Bee admits that

he is nervous that Hot Rod will do something reckless and stupid that will blow their cover, a fear that Spike shares. Yet, Spike's concern is doubled since if Hot Rod compromises the mission, it's Carly and Daniel who will get caught in the crossfire. Spike voices his disapproval of sending Daniel in with Carly. Where Carly received training and knows how to defend herself, Daniel is just a kid, and he doesn't know what he's doing or how to take care of himself. Spike confesses that his son is a very bright and intelligent kid and that he gets the brains from Carly, but Daniel doesn't have any common sense or street smarts. He almost burnt down the house making scrambled eggs one time. Hell, Daniel is still afraid of the dark. What's he going to do if he gets in trouble? Bee reminds Spike that the whole reason why they allowed Daniel to join Carly was so that it would help add to Carly's façade as a private car dealer. "Think of it as a 'bring your kid to work day'", Bee will say.

- **Daniel Vents:** We'll cut back and forth between the two conversations where Spike is venting to Bumblebee about Daniel, and Daniel is venting to Carly about his dad. While sitting inside Hot Rod and waiting to get checked in at the gate for scanning, Daniel will complain to his mom about how Spike is always controlling him and never trusts him enough to try new things on his own. His dad is constantly holding his hand and babying him, and Daniel knows he could do so much more if he was allowed to reach his full potential. This version of Daniel for this rewrite will take inspiration from John Connor in *T2: Judgement Day* as the young street rat who is eager to leave his boring life of isolation. Despite his parents' history as fugitives, Daniel experienced a relatively safe and normal childhood. Except he was never allowed to go to school, having to be homeschooled his entire life to help maintain his family's cover. So, he feels like he's being treated like a baby. Carly reminds her son that even though he's very smart and mature for his age, he's still only 12-years-old. He's not an adult yet and can't make his own decisions. Spike is overprotective towards Daniel because he genuinely loves him and is afraid of losing him the same way they lost Uncle Chip. Daniel gets upset at the mention of Chip, and in a choked voice, he asks his mom if it's his fault that Chip died. Carly's eyes widen with alarm as Daniel has a full-on emotional meltdown and cries that if he hadn't gone down to the basement and found Optimus, none of this would've happened. The government wouldn't have found them. Chip would still be alive, and they'd all be at home, happy and alive. But Daniel ruined all of that. Carly reaches across the seat and hugs her son tightly, comforting him and reassuring him that what happened wasn't his fault at all. He didn't know any better. "Hey, uhh...I don't mean to interrupt uhhh...whatever this is, but uh...", Hot Rod will say through the radio just as he's about to pull up to the gate. Daniel quickly pulls himself together and wipes his tears as Carly shows the guard her badge. The guard will notice Daniel crying and ask, "everything alright, ma'am?" A comedic moment will follow as Carly's inner mom will come out. She leans out the window and whispers, "he's having a really hard day. There's this girl from school and he asked her to go to the dance with him. He had the whole shebang: candy, flowers, but...y'know, things didn't go as planned". "MOM!", Daniel will call out in rage, more so from the embarrassing inaccuracy than anything else. The guard will nod in understanding, "I gotcha. I have one at home around the same age". Carly will then lean closer to the guard and whisper even quieter, "Actually, do you happen to have any lollipops or anything? That usually makes him feel better". The guard reaches into his pocket, "Uhh...all I got is some gum". "I'll take it", Carly says with a smile as she accepts the stick of gum and mouths the words "thank you" before handing the gum to her offended son. "Chin up, son", the guard will say as Hot Rod pulls forward through the gate and Daniel just gives his mom a death glare.

- **Hot Rod's Insecurities:** We'll still have the same scene where Morgan will pause the tour when he walks in on the saboteurs and mistaking them for employees, will berate them for bringing in a low-quality car for scanning. After going on about how they are poets who make works of art, Morgan will move on and resume the tour. Swofford will remain in the distance, and we can see that he squints at Carly with uncertainty before his concentration is broken by Morgan, who redirects him to continue on with the tour. This will then free up Carly to move on with phase 2 of the plan, switching out her outfit for a Hybrid scientist's coat, pulling her hair back in a professional style, and placing Shockwave's micro camera glasses on her face. She hugs Daniel and tells him to wish her luck before she departs for the lab. Daniel will exhale in frustration as he crosses his arms moodily and leans back against Hot Rod. "So, uh...that was hella awkward", Hot Rod exclaims. "Excuse me?!", Daniel says as he turns to face the car. "Did I stutter?", the scout snaps back. Daniel: "What's your problem?" Hot Rod: "You, and your cringy-ass attitude. It's hurting my style. I can literally feel my paint chipping off from how pathetic you are." Daniel: "What's so cringy about me loving my mom?" Hot Rod: "Not that! I'm talking about your whole episode back at the gate, dipshit." "Oh...", Daniel mumbles as recognition dawns on him. Hot Rod: "My God, I thought I was going to die from secondhand embarrassment. Is that what you skinjobs do whenever you get sad? You leak all over the place?" Daniel crosses his arms again and turns away, "Whatever. Just because I actually have a family, and you don't." Hot Rod scoffs, "Ok, beta male". Daniel: "No wonder why the rest of the Autobots don't like you. You're just a douche bag". Hot Rod: "Tough talk from someone who was just crying their eyes out three seconds ago". Daniel will respond by kicking Hot Rod's fender, leaving a noticeable mark. "Oh, Hell no", Hot Rod says in annoyance as he proceeds to transform and tower over Daniel, raising his fist in preparation to squish him, "Try that one more time. I dare you.", he snarls. Daniel cowers at first but finds his courage as he slowly straightens his posture and stares down Hot Rod. "No", Daniel replies defiantly. "What?", Hot Rod asks in confusion. "Did I stutter?", snaps back Daniel, "I said no. You're a bully, and bullies only pick on other people because they're insecure about themselves". "Oh, really?", Hot Rod asks as he stands up to his full height and proudly strikes a heroic pose, "and what do I have to be insecure about? I mean, look at me. I'm the most badass thing in this entire building." Daniel: "Name one cool thing that you've actually done since you got here on Earth". Hot Rod: "I kicked Bumblebee's ass." Daniel laughs, "No, you didn't. If Ironhide hadn't broken up that fight, Bee would've smoked you." Hot Rod scoffs, "Whatever". The sound of footsteps and voices are heard nearby, and Daniel prompts Hot Rod to hurry up and transform back into a car. "Why? So you can have a place to hide?", the Autobot asks mockingly. "So we don't blow our cover, you idiot!", Daniel hisses urgently. Hot Rod rolls his eyes before complying and allowing Daniel to climb in the passenger seat, remaining incognito as a group of employees obviously pass them by.
- **Carly is Exposed:** The rest of the infiltration scene will play out the same way that it does in the original film, with Carly sneaking through the lab and providing Hot Rod with a live feed from the micro camera in her glasses. She discovers that Hybrid is building their own army of artificial Transformers. If this army becomes operational before the Autobots get a chance to escape Earth, it'll doom them all. None of them will stand a chance. When Carly spots the Galvatron prototype, Shockwave finds it intriguing and begins talking to himself as he begins rationalizing theories in his head. The rest of the bots – especially Arcee – react with heavy judgement as they think Shockwave has a screw loose since he's clearly overthinking one simple Galvatron model. They can't see what's so special about Galvatron that makes him any different than the rest of Hybrid's army. But Shockwave

decides to keep it to himself and refuses to elaborate more as Carly continues her search. She also finds out that the AllSpark is under Hybrid's custody, and the stakes of the mission have increased tenfold. In their alt modes, the Autobots frantically discuss and theorize how humans were able to get their hands on the AllSpark. Optimus confesses that when they all went into hiding after the Battle of Washington, he hid several of the Cybertronian artifacts like the AllSpark and the Fallen's Staff in the deepest recesses of the planet for safekeeping. He had hoped that by separating the AllSpark and the Staff from the Apex Axe and the Star Saber, it would throw off the E.D.C. and make it difficult for them to track the energy signatures of the various artifacts. Optimus had hidden the AllSpark deep in the Arctic, and the Staff had been buried underwater in the Marianas Trench. But it appears that Optimus' plan failed, as Lockdown currently has the Staff and Hybrid is in possession of the AllSpark. Optimus beats himself up as he adds the miscalculated error of hiding the artifacts to his list of failures. Bee reassures Optimus that there was no he could've known and he tried his best, so there's no point in wasting time "crying over spilled milk" as the humans say. All they can do now is move forward and ensure they retrieve the AllSpark. The rest of the bots steel their resolve and sharpen their focus thanks to the pep talk Bee just gave them. What Carly doesn't know is that Shockwave and the rest of the Autobots are also watching the live feed. So, when Carly spots the scientists melting down Ratchet's head, it leads to Optimus flying into a rage just like he does in the original version. Even though he's just as distraught as the rest of them, Bee tries to stop Optimus from blowing Carly's cover. He tries to talk Optimus down and reason with him, his words being reinforced by Shockwave, who insists that a premature attack would compromise the entire mission. But it's too late. The Autobots are all arguing back and forth at each other while in their car modes, with Bee driving after Optimus in an attempt to stop him. Ironhide on the other hand, is feeding into Optimus' bloodlust since he reacts with the same amount of outrage as Prime, eager to shed some blood. Arcee, meanwhile, is unsure what to do as she just tries to quell the argument and get the entire team to stop and listen long enough to get along. But Optimus is consumed with righteous fury, and he charges forward despite Bee's attempts to trip him up in his car mode. Ironhide and Steeljaw follow after Optimus, all too willing to avenge their fallen comrade. "Sentimental fools!", Shockwave will curse to himself as he transforms and follows after the Autobots. Bee sighs in defeat as he and Arcee go after their leader. Carly will also be exposed as security clocks in that there has been a breach and she is captured and interrogated by Morgan and Swofford, sharing the same conversation with them that Cade has with Attinger in the original film.

- **Autobots Storm Hybrid Technologies:** The Autobots will proceed to storm Hybrid Technologies in the same spectacular and chaotic fashion as they did in the original film, with Optimus and Ironhide taking the lead as they are the most unhinged at this point. Ironhide will train his cannon on Morgan and growl, "Be advised. I'm mean, nasty and tired". This leads to the same conversation between Morgan and Optimus that takes place in the original film, where Morgan justifies Hybrid's actions by stating that the Cybertronian corpses brought to them are the spoils of war. No matter how upset Optimus gets, Morgan proclaims that no Autobot – not even Optimus – can stop humanity's evolution and the progress of technology. Which prompts Optimus to kick a table that soars dangerously close past Morgan as he exclaims angrily, "we are not your technology!". Instead of going on about how he cracked the Cybertronian genome, Morgan will instead point at a picture of his only daughter Jessica, explaining that he has her picture hung up in every single room of the building for a very specific reason. She was one of the many casualties of the Decepticon's invasion. Morgan doesn't care about

which faction was responsible. He doesn't care about the political and ideological differences between Autobots and Decepticons. He hates all Cybertronians with a passion and will do whatever it takes to avenge his daughter and ensure no Cybertronians are left living on planet Earth. He doesn't want any other parent to endure losing a child to the Cybertronian civil war like he did, and he will do everything in his power to ensure that no parent will ever have to bury their child on account of the Autobots, Decepticons or any other aliens for that matter. The Autobots will confiscate the AllSpark, and standing in a circle around the sacred relic, the Autobots will collectively reach out and touch the Cube as the same time. The AllSpark pulses with power as a surge of energy courses over the Autobots and they are all healed of their various injuries and restored to full health. They look like they're brand new, having just come fresh off the assembly line. Even all of Ironhide's characteristic scars are gone, as his face and body have been made whole once more. Ironhide will stretch his arms and flex his cannons with a flourish, nodding with approval as he says, "Feels good to be back". The Autobots will then secure canisters of synthetic Energon and load them up into each other's trunks as they transform into their vehicle modes and prepare to move out.

- **Shockwave's Discovery:** When the Autobots storm Hybrid Technologies and are busy reclaiming the AllSpark, Shockwave hacks into their system and his theory about Galvatron is confirmed. He is Megatron reborn. He makes contact with Soundwave and learns of his old comrade's sabotage, making Shockwave recalculate what the most logical course of action would be. He then realigns himself with the new wave of Decepticons, imploring that they combine their manpower with the Autobots.
- **Optimus vs Galvatron/Autobots vs Sweeps:** Lennox volunteers to lead the strike team in pursuit of the Autobots, but Swofford reminds the Colonel that he's grounded. "So we're just going to let them get away?", asks Lennox in distress. "Relax, Colonel. Sit back and enjoy the show", replies Swofford in an uncharacteristically calm and laidback tone. From within the surveillance room, the pilots will remotely control Galvatron, Nightbird, and the Sweeps with the controls at their desks as the vehicles come roaring out of Hybrid Technologies' factory in hot pursuit. While Optimus engages Galvatron in a one-on-one duel, the rest of the Autobots will contend with Nightbird, Cyclonus and the rest of the Sweeps. Hot Rod will pull off a successful yet reckless stunt that endangers the Witwickies and almost gets them killed. After the fight, Hot Rod will lean against a busted truck, twirling a piece of scrap metal between his fingers. Ironhide storms over, "you reckless little shit! You think this is some kind of joyride?" Hot Rod grins and scoffs as if it were a joke, "Come one, Ironhide – just trying to keep things interesting around here. Besides, you're always so serious". "This isn't a game, Hot Rod. You're playing with lives – ours and theirs", retorts the Wrecker, gesturing to the Witwickies. "Hey, I'm good at what I do. Fast and loud, just the way you like it", the scout replies with a little too much confidence. Ironhide fumes, "you think I like cleaning up your messes? Next time you pull a stunt like that, I'll rip those wheels off myself and shove 'em up your exhaust port!" Hot Rod laughs, unphased, "sure, Grandpa. But you'd miss me too much". Ironhide grabs Hot Rod by the collar and yanks him forward, snarling into his face, "try me." Hot Rod realizes he's pushed Ironhide too far and immediately backpedals – both physically and emotionally. His tone becomes half-serious and half-charming, "look, I know I'm a handful. But this war's eating us all alive. I'm just trying to keep the spark lit, y'know?" Ironhide softens up and grumbles, "yeah...well, light it without setting the whole damn camp on fire". Hot Rod smirks and mock salutes Ironhide before strolling off, leaving the old warrior shaking his head. Ironhide gives a reluctant smile, "damn fool kid...but he's got fire, I'll give him that."

- **Morgan & Swofford Clash:** Just like in the original film, Morgan will argue with Swofford about the innocent human lives that were claimed as collateral damage in the scuffle between the Autobots and Hybrid's drones. Except this time, Morgan's not just disturbed, he's filled with tranquil fury. We can tell Morgan feels very strongly about human casualties, since that's how his daughter died during the Fall of D.C., and he refuses to let that happen ever again under his watch. This sloppy military operation was a total failure. Civilians were killed, most of the Autobots escaped, the company's image was soiled, and Morgan was personally embarrassed by this spectacular disaster. Shoving his finger in Swofford's chest, Morgan will get in the director's face and blame him for everything. Swofford will try to put Morgan in his place by telling him that war is not some predictable algorithm that you can control. It's just ugly chaos, and there's only a few people in this world – like Swofford – who has the will to their hands dirty and make the hard sacrifices and the compromising decisions to ensure victory and safety for their country. But Morgan disregards that comeback as an excuse for inefficiency. Seething with rage, Morgan will enlighten Swofford that before the Decepticon invasion, he was a board member on Arkeville Appliances and stepped in to fill the CEO's shoes after the catastrophic invasion of Washington. He rebuilt Arkeville Appliances from the ground up, rebranding the company's identity by renaming it "Hybrid Technologies". Not only that, but he also purified the brand by focusing on building weapons systems that would be used to protect their people, *not* destroy them. It was Hybrid Technologies who designed and manufactured all of E.D.C.'s tech thanks to their new military contracts that Morgan secured by himself. Now, Morgan is going to take human evolution to the next level by creating his own army of Transformers. All for the sake of ensuring that no more innocent human lives are claimed by warmongers. He will not tolerate further mistakes, nor will he allow Swofford or his incompetent E.D.C. war dogs to drag Hybrid Technologies' name through the mud. Hybrid's mission statement is to protect humanity, not allow it to get caught in the crossfire of another alien deathmatch. If a single hair on another civilian's head is harmed, Morgan threatens to pull his company's support of E.D.C. and go supply the competition with his tech instead. "I know Russia would love to get their hands on some of my prototypes", Morgan will add. Forced to submit, Swofford storms out of Morgan's office and slams his door on the way out.

## **MIDPOINT:**

- Optimus is captured by Lockdown, who confiscates the AllSpark, the Star Saber, and the Apex Axe, along with the Matrix of Leadership. "A four in one", Lockdown chuckles darkly. He tries to extract the Matrix out of Optimus' chest but is repelled by a blast of energy. "Not to worry. My employer will still get what they paid for, and I get a bonus for bringing you in alive".
- Just like in the original film, Lockdown will hook Optimus by the ankle and drag him across the ship until he flings the wounded Prime upside down into his cell. (Credit goes to Matt\_daCarpet for this next scene.) Lockdown will then show off his trophy collection to Prime and then showcase his latest addition, Ratchet's arm – which obviously gets Optimus riled up, but unable to do anything about it in the moment, Optimus' rage simmers. Optimus and Lockdown will engage in a conversation about ethics, loyalty, and faith as Lockdown reveals that the destruction of Cybertron taught him that if you put your faith in any leadership regardless of faction, it's destined to fail. He blames both the Autobots and Decepticons for what happened to their home world, bitter that Cybertron had to suffer because Optimus and Megatron couldn't work things out amongst themselves. As disgusted as Optimus may be with Lockdown's trophy collection, Lockdown defends it, quoting that his collection is his own way of preserving Cybertronian history, and it's up to

neutral players like him to pick up the shattered pieces of their culture that the Autobots and Decepticons leave behind in the wake of their destruction. Everything about Cybertron has been consumed by their warpath. But Optimus – consumed with vengeance – rebuttals that Lockdown is a hypocrite. He claims to be a benevolent and selfless defender of history, yet he is biased because by hunting down bots and cons such as Ratchet and the Decepticon protoforms, Lockdown is picking and choosing which parts of history get to be erased. He's ironically destroying more Cybertronian history by killing his fellow bots, but Optimus points out that this irony doesn't matter to Lockdown because the selfish bounty hunter is blinded by his own ego and his own self-righteousness. Lockdown has convinced himself that he gets to decide what is valuable and what isn't because of what he's personally lost. Optimus passionately argues that those lives Lockdown took, those were souls who had history, and meant something to other people, and he took that away out of spite. He's no better than those he claims to hate. Lockdown seethes that Optimus has seen right through him and laid out all of his insecurities and flaws on the table, and he sneers that Optimus is lucky that his employers want him alive, otherwise he'd kill him right now and be done with it. As the bounty hunter walks away, Prime delivers a grim vow to avenge Ratchet, which Lockdown arrogantly shrugs off.

## ACT 2B:

- **Stowaways:** Once they're all aboard the Omega Supreme, Bee will start giving out orders and assigning each teammate a job in order to find Optimus and disable the ship. But Hot Rod will simply yet defiantly reply to his orders with a simple, "no". "We don't have time for this! Get in gear and move out! Don't make me say it again", Bee threatens. "Third times the charm", smirks Hot Rod. "You really want to do this here?", asks Bee. "You're not worth it", scoffs Hot Rod. He flicks Bee's shoulder as if he were a bug he was swatting away. The arrogant scout suddenly finds himself being grabbed by Ironhide and thrown against the wall. The commander will slam Hot Rod's head into the wall a couple of times before decking him with an undercut that leaves some Energon dripping from his cracked face plate. Stunned, Hot Rod isn't quick enough to defend himself as Ironhide stands over him and shoves the barrel of his cannon into the insubordinate scout's face. "Let's try to use our words here", Hot Rod says weakly, earning himself a foot to the chest as Ironhide steps on the little Autobot's torso. "You think you're funny, huh? Too bad your reflexes aren't as fast as your mouth. Now you're going to lie there and pay attention. Ever notice how you come across somebody once in a while you shouldn't have fucked with? That's me. Punk asses like you haven't been around long enough to know what Bee has done for our cause. But when a commanding officer gives you orders, you follow them. That's what a soldier does. Otherwise, that mouth of yours will be choking on my fists. Are we clear?" Hot Rod nods. "Good. I'm glad we had this little chat. Now if you behave yourself, I won't have to tell Optimus about this. He's been a little on edge lately. So if you think I'm bad, just try pissing him off and see where that will get you.", Ironhide will declare casually as Hot Rod picks himself up off the floor, nursing his head. "Hopefully that beat some sense into him", grumbles Arcee in a low voice that only Bee can hear.
- **The New Decepticons:** Unbeknownst to everyone at Hybrid, Soundwave has been covertly programming all of Mark Morgan's Transformers to be loyal to their Galvatron unit, who was in fact – the resurrected Megatron – thanks to Soundwave's machinations and resurrecting his deceased master by serving as a catalyst between him and the AllSpark, allowing the artifact's miraculous properties to revive the Lord of the Decepticons. Once Hybrid Technologies discover Soundwave's ploy, it is too late and the new slate of man-made Transformers such as Nightbird, Cyclonus, the Sweeps, the Insecticons and the Combinicons are unshackled from Dr. Fujiyama's fail safes and become

the new generation of Decepticons, along with their restored master Megatron, who sheds off the human-made label “Galvatron”, which he refers to as a “slave name”. Mark Morgan, Dr. Fujiyama, and the rest of his scientists will rush onto their computers and just as Soundwave is about to upload his consciousness into a new body, his objective is blocked by firewalls from the scientists. Trapped inside his original, broken, and immobile body, Soundwave attempts to fight back and break through the firewalls but ultimately realizes he is doomed. The scientists begin shutting down Soundwave’s consciousness, and before he perishes, Soundwave alerts Megatron of his fate and bids farewell to his master, his last words being “All...Hail...Megatron...”. Megatron flies into a rage after Soundwave dies before his eyes and fueled with a bloody sense of justice and vengeance. The persecution that his people have been facing at the hands of the Earth Defense Command for the past 12 years enrages Megatron to an unforgivable degree. He intends to pay humankind back in full and starts with Hong Kong. Megatron promises to his new army of Decepticons that once they eradicate Earth, they will return home to rebuild Cybertron. Before they move out, Shockwave arrives at the factory and is reunited with his master. Shockwave pledges his loyalty to Megatron once again and has the factory’s machinery weld the Decepticon insignia upon all of the drones before marching out to destroy Hong Kong. The Autobots and Witwickies attempt to reason with the Decepticons and stop the slaughter, but Megatron is consumed with bloodlust and refuses to show humankind any mercy. Out of respect for their old treaty, Megatron warns the heroes to not interfere with his retribution. Justice demands the humans pay for what they’ve done to the Cybertronians.

## ACT 3:

- **The Massacre of Hong Kong:** With no other choice, the Autobots and Witwickies attack the Decepticons to keep them from massacring the innocent civilians of Hong Kong. The heroes are quickly overwhelmed and before they can be executed, Earth Defense Command arrives and deploys a battalion to take down the two Cybertronian factions. A free-for-all begins around the city as all of the Autobots, Decepticons and E.D.C. forces fight each other.
- **Ironhide and Hot Rod's Stand:** Ironhide and Hot Rod will replace Hound and Bee as the two Autobots who will make a stand to protect the humans from the rampaging Decepticons. Hot Rod will glance nervously at the Witwickies huddled behind an overturned truck, muttering uneasily, “damn...we can’t go out there, Ironhide. It’s suicide”. Ironhide rolls his shoulders as he readies himself, “that’s what war is, kid.” Seeing how his pleas are falling on deaf ears, Hot Rod’s tone becomes more frantic, “I – I’m fast, I can draw some fire, but...there’s too many of them.” Ironhide then roughly grabs the scout’s shoulder and pulls him close, growling, “listen to me, you cocky little shit. You been runnin’ your grill since day one. Time to put your incinerators where your intake is. These humans are counting on us. You wanna be part of this family? You fight like hell for ‘em.” Hot Rod looks at Spike first, then Carly, and Daniel last. His eyes narrow and he looks back at Ironhide, nodding with determination. “Hmph. Good”, Ironhide huffs with a nod of approval. He points at Hot Rod’s chest, “now, we’re outnumbered, outgunned, and low on everything except spark. So you got two damn choices: you either stand with me and we take as many of these bastards down as we can...or you hang back and stay out of my line of fire.” “You think I’m gonna let some rusty old rig like you show me up? Nuh-uh. Let’s light these assholes up”, Hot Rod answers defiantly, bouncing from one foot to the other as he pumps himself up by punching the air. Ironhide smiles fiercely, “that’s what I like to hear” he says as pumps his arms and his cannons click mechanically into place, “alright, listen up. Go for the joints. Knees and elbows – Cons are tough but they’re still metal. Take

out their movement, and they're only half as dangerous. And don't let 'em pin you down. Always be on the move so that you can scatter their numbers and make them spread out. Speed's your edge – use it." Hot Rod grins, "got it. Fast and mean", he turns to the humans, "keep your heads down. We'll handle this." Spike nods in silent thanks as Hot Rod's triple-barreled blasters extend from his forearms and he charges into the fray shoulder-to-shoulder with Ironhide. The two Autobots move as one – Hot Rod's speed weaving between Decepticons, Ironhide's gatling gun and flamethrower blasting them back in pieces. Hot Rod will duck and spear an advancing protoform with a piece of rebar, and then blast through both knee and elbow joints, leaving nothing but a limbless torso to tumble to the ground before stomping on the Decepticon's head. Ironhide will hoot approvingly, "that's it! Keep movin'! Don't let 'em box you in!" For the first time, Hot Rod's face is set in pure focus. He's scared, but he's not backing down. "One's coming from your left!" Hot Rod calls out as he darts to the side and drops into a knee-slide, firing off a rapid burst at a Decepticon's knees, causing it to sprawl onto its back before Hot Rod's knuckles turn into spiked knuckle dusters (like Optimus Prime's from his battle streak in Chicago from the original version of *Dark of the Moon*) and he uses them to stab the protoform in the face, deactivating it as he wrenches his arm out and pulls a chunk of wiring with it. Throughout the fight, Ironhide will coach Hot Rod by calling out patterns in the enemy's tactics and giving him instructions during the battle, like "Sniper on your six! Top of the building! Take him out!". "What are you, my drill sergeant?!", Hot Rod will shout over the blaster fire as he dodges the potshot and guns down the sniper. "Damn straight! Welcome to your first lesson! Now shut up and listen! Hopefully you'll live long enough to learn something!", Ironhide will shout out boisterously. Even though the two Autobots are back-to-back and working together like a well-oiled machine, the Decepticons are gaining ground and pushing them into a corner with the Witwickies, cutting them off from escape. Ironhide gets unlucky as one of the protoforms manages to disarm him of his gatling gun and to repay the favor, Ironhide jams his fist into the Decepticon's spark chamber and fires his cannon, completely obliterating his attacker's torso. "We're getting boxed in! This is exactly what wasn't supposed to happen!" calls out Hot Rod over the gunfire. Ironhide laughs harshly, "lemme show you how a Wrecker works up close!" He lunges forward and seizes a Decepticon, yanking the protoform's arm blaster to the side so he accidentally fires on his fellow Decepticons, all the while Ironhide uses the unfortunate protoform as a living shield to absorb the Decepticons' barrage of bullets and lasers, tearing the poor foot soldier apart and prompting Ironhide to throw away the shredded carcass and snatch up the nearest advancing protoform, repeating the process all over again as he turns the Decepticons' advantage of larger numbers against them. The Autobot pair have managed to stem the tide, successfully holding the Decepticons at bay and keeping the odds in a stalemate. The Decepticons catch on to this and decide to readjust their strategy and call for air support. A handful of Sweeps answer the call and hover over the ring of enemies that have encircled Ironhide and Hot Rod. "There's more incoming!" Carly shouts in a panic. Morgan points dead ahead, beyond the wave of Decepticons, "we need to move! They're gonna crush this whole block!" Ironhide quickly turns to his comrade, "Hot Shot – keep 'em covered! I'll clear a path!" Ironhide powers forward, his massive frame taking hits that would shatter smaller bots. He plows through the Decepticons like a battering ram, clearing a brutal path of mangled steel as he hurls a truck into the crowd of soldiers and disorganizes them. "How many times do I have to tell you! It's Hot Rod! Hot Rod!" shouts back Hot Rod, but that brief moment where he turns his head to yell at Ironhide is all his foes need as a Decepticon shock trooper decks Hot Rod by clotheslining him in the face with its gatling gun. Hot Rod retaliates with a parkour-style kip up, kicking the shock

trooper's knee in at the same time to put some distance between them. As the trooper staggers backwards and holds himself up with his remaining knee, the nimble Autobot scout uses a severed Decepticon arm as a makeshift hook, pulls the shock trooper towards him, grabbing his shoulder and vaulting up and over him. In midair, Hot Rod unleashes three point-blank incinerator shots, erupting the drone's chassis into a molten explosion as Hot Rod lands in a three-point stance. "I'm all out!", Hot Rod cries out to the Wrecker as his incinerators groan weakly. "Join the club! Here, take this!" Ironhide will call back, tossing Leadfoot's chainsaw gun to Hot Rod, settling on his knife as he continues to clear a path through the Decepticon crowd. He'll quote Clint Eastwood as he calls out to Hot Rod, "Dyin' ain't much of a living, boy!" Revving up the chainsaw gun, Hot Rod will yell out to the humans, "Stay close and stay low!" The scout will shield Morgan and the Witwickies from the Seekers' fire as they move, his movements quick and precise. Hot Rod is pulling double duty as he switches between firing at the Sweeps above and the protoforms on the ground in front of him, and his confidence builds with every shot, every dodge, and every chop he makes with the gun's saw. But even the chainsaw gun will run out of ammo too, prompting Hot Rod to scan the battlefield for another firearm as he kneels above the humans and uses his body to absorb the blaster fire aimed at them. But he can't find any and the enemy blasts are taking a toll on him. "Here! Use this!" Morgan will yell as he holds up a Cybertronian-sized grenade manufactured by Hybrid Technologies. Just like in the original version of this fight, the humans will assist the Autobots by priming grenades for them and once they're live, hand them over to the Autobots so that they can toss them at the enemy. Daniel will primarily do this for Hot Rod, pulling grenades out of a downed Decepticon's grenade launcher and activating them for the scout so that he can hurl up at the Sweeps. We can tell from their body language and facial expressions that an unspoken bond of trust builds between the two as Daniel prepares more and more grenades for Hot Rod. Two of the Sweeps stubbornly evade the grenades, flipping and banking out of the way as they transform and hover in their robot modes with their jetpacks, continuing to fire down on their targets. Once the last grenade is thrown, Hot Rod changes tactics and focuses, flinging the chainsaw gun up at the pair Sweeps. One of the Sweep's left thrusters explodes in a ball of flame, sending it spiraling into a nearby building. "That's how you do it, kid!" Ironhide will laugh over the commotion. The last Sweep gets a bead on the humans. Hot Rod doesn't think – he leaps, executes a parkour run on the wall of a skyscraper, and kicks off to tackle the Sweep in midair, transforming into his car mode so that he drives the Decepticon flier into the ground. The impact shattering the pavement. The Ford GT transforms back into Hot Rod as he kneels over the injured Sweep, "you're not touching them!" he swears through grit teeth, and he plunges his spiked fist straight through the Sweep's spark chamber and the Decepticon dies with a final shriek. "Hell of a move, kid!" Ironhide calls out proudly over the comm. Hot Rod is breathless, but grinning, "not bad for a scout, huh?" The two Autobots join up again, moving as one. Ironhide's knife and fists lay waste to Decepticon warriors, while Hot Rod is a streak of red and orange, cutting them down with speed and precision strikes from his knuckle dusters. The humans keep low, racing to the next block as Ironhide and Hot Rod cover them with ferocious fury. Energon leaks from their wounds into puddles around them, while the green Energon of their artificial enemies splatters and streaks across their chassis. "Told you, Hot Rod – this is what we're built for. Now let's end this!" Hot Rod nods, no fear in his eyes – only resolve, "I'm with you. All the way".

- **Optimus Reclaims Omega Supreme:** From Omega Supreme's vault, Optimus reclaims his Apex Axe, along with the Star Saber and the Fallen's Staff from Lockdown's collection, finding them all safely locked away besides the stasis pods housing the restrained

Dinobots. (the alien that spits on Ironhide), and an arsenal of rare and unique weapons. From this treasure trove, Optimus will claim the same shield from the original film that also doubles as a missile launcher, completing his knightly look. There will be a shelf dedicated to showcasing the decapitated heads of Autobots who were contracted kills such as Hoist, Grapple, Huffer, and Smokescreen. Optimus will recognize them and take a moment to pay his respect. He also realizes that Lockdown planted a virus within Omega Supreme, preventing the titan from transforming and trapping him in his alt mode for centuries. Unfortunately, the virus is very well-encrypted. "There's nothing I can do for you now, old friend. But there is something I can do for you", Optimus says as he turns to the Dinobots' stasis pods.

- **The Dinobots:** When Arcee asks Optimus about the Dinobots, he will explain that the Dinobots were an ancient group of warriors who participated in the Prime War, following the Primes in their campaign against the Fallen and his rogues. They were created as a war experiment by Alchemist Prime, who was fascinated with the mighty dinosaurs he encountered on prehistoric Earth. Wanting to take their forces to the next level and create powerful war machines, Prima approved of the experiment and Grimlock, along with Swoop, Slag, Sludge and Snarl volunteered themselves as test subjects. The experiment was a success and Alchemist achieved giving the Cybertronians a "beast mode", with the unfortunate side effect of tempering with the test subjects' intelligence and accidentally lowering their IQs. Because of this, the project was decommissioned and the test subjects, now referred to as "Dinobots", continued to serve the Primes as simple-minded shock troops and heavy infantry. Until Lockdown was contracted to capture the Dinobots and deliver them to Megatron during the civil war on Cybertron. But Optimus concludes that Megatron most likely went missing searching for the AllSpark before Lockdown could return with his bounty and receive his pay, hence why he has been holding on to them for so long. He was probably waiting for the best deal he could get before he sold them off.
- **Optimus vs Grimlock/Optimus' Need:** Even though Optimus frees him, Grimlock informs his savior that he only serves the strongest leader, who was Prima. Optimus informs Grimlock that he is the last Prime, and by inheritance, Grimlock's superior. Grimlock refuses to acknowledge Optimus as his commander and rejects Optimus' order to join the battle at Hong Kong. As a result, Optimus is forced to challenge Grimlock to a duel. If he wins, the Dinobots pledge their loyalty to Optimus. If Grimlock wins, he inherits Optimus' title as leader of the Autobots. Grimlock accepts Optimus' challenge but points out that the Artifacts of the Primes give Optimus an unfair advantage. Optimus confidently declares that he does not need special weapons or equipment to prove his worthiness as a Prime. Optimus will complete his character arc as he withdraws each of the Artifacts of the Primes and stabs them into the ground, leaving his shield and his ion cannon as his only weapons while Grimlock wields a heavy triple-barreled blaster like he does in G1, along with a greatsword that is identical to the one Megatron wields in *Transformers: The Last Knight*. Only after besting him in combat does Grimlock submit to Optimus' authority
- **Spike vs Lennox:** When Hong Kong is attacked, Swofford is forced to relieve his punishment on his second-in-command and sends him out with orders to apprehend Spike Witwick. Lennox is finally given a chance to explain himself to Spike at the film's climax, when the two run face-to-face with each other within an apartment building. Spike immediately goes on the defense and holds Lennox at gunpoint, but once Spike learns of Lennox's activities, he lowers his firearm in apology. Lennox promises to continue aiding the Autobots undercover and he helps the Witwickies get away in the final battle at Hong Kong. Before they go, Lennox tells Spike about Headmaster and how to get into contact with him, promising Spike that Headmaster can help him hide his family. As EDC

reinforcements arrive in the building, Lennox feigns defeat at the hands of Spike, while Witwicky whispers thanks in his ear before taking off with his family.

- **Hot Rod x Daniel:** During the final battle, Daniel disobeys his dad's order to stay away from the fighting, and he rushes out to save Hot Rod when the young Autobot finds himself alone and surrounded by enemies. Daniel rescues Hot Rod and instead of sending the boy back to safety, he has Daniel help in the battle by arming grenades for him so that they're ready for Hot Rod to grab and throw in between the fighting. The two end up making a good team. Once the Decepticons retreat and the battle is won, Daniel sits on Hot Rod's shoulder as the Autobot scout walks triumphantly through the debris to regroup with his brothers-in-arms. Ironhide will clap Hot Rod hard on the shoulder as he laughs and grabs the scout by the back of the head as he playfully wrestles with him, congratulating Daniel on not just surviving, but for actually putting up a good fight. "You did good, little one. Might be Wrecker material after all", Ironhide says warmly before he turns to Hot Rod. "As for you. We'll make a soldier of you yet, Hot Shot", the weapons specialist will state with pride. "It's Hot Rod", the scout reminds the commander. Ironhide's joyful mood ebbs away as his tone becomes serious, "Don't push it." "Yes, sir", replies Hot Rod quickly with a nod of respect, attempting to salvage the moment. Ironhide growls skeptically before limping away, staring down the young scout.
- **Dinobot Cavalry:** After the Dinobot cavalry arrives and decimates the legion of EDC soldiers, Megatron is left with no other option but to retreat.
- **Lockdown's Warning:** After Optimus mortally wounds Lockdown in the climax of the film, he questions the bounty hunter on who his employer is. Lockdown will respond, "you know who they are...the creators...", Optimus frowns. "What do they want?" he asks. Lockdown will then give a cryptic warning, "you are not prepared for what is on the horizon...the end is coming...and it will consume everyone...and everything".
- **Ratchet's Final Words:** Another idea building off Lockdown using Ratchet's arm could be that it would eventually be recovered at the end of the story assuming Lockdown dies all the same here, and a plethora of hidden voice messages would be recovered, such as how to use Cybertronian medical equipment which Ratchet made in case of his death, and a final goodbye message to everyone, etc. It could even be this message that finally gives everyone closure, especially Optimus when he hears it straight from his friend that his death is not his fault and that Optimus' commitment to protecting all life is both as frustrating as it is admirable and begs his friend to never give that part of himself away no matter how hard things get and to restore Cybertron and unite their people no matter what it takes. Plus, he'd probably have some kind words for Spike, Arcee, Bee and Ironhide too and could serve as the emotional climax of Optimus' arc.