

## REWRITING TRANSFORMERS PRIME SEASON 2 NOTES

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**Disclaimer:** These notes are a brainstorming document, not a formal outline. Expect half-baked ideas, meta commentary, abandoned concepts, and ideas that may contradict each other. You're free to follow them, remix them, or ignore them entirely for your own rewrites.

- **Writing Team's Philosophy & Approach:** During the development stage of *Transformers Prime*, several Autobots and Decepticons were considered for the roster on both teams. The writers wanted to tell a more focused, mature story compared to some earlier *Transformers* shows like G1 or Energon. They loved the idea of introducing new generations to characters who didn't always get much of a spotlight in previous shows. By doing this, they avoided retreading familiar ground and gave themselves more creative freedom to develop new dynamics. Hasbro also liked the idea of refreshing the brand with lesser-known characters, since it gave them new toy opportunities and focusing on a smaller, tighter cast also helped the budget because a leaner team meant fewer character models had to be animated. So, while classic and iconic characters who were household names like Optimus, Bumblebee, Megatron and Starscream were essential and included, others were more of a fresh spin to avoid rehashing G1's huge cast. There wasn't ever a formal rule that said, "no classic characters!" but it was more of a guide for the writing team to balance out the old faces with some new ones. So basically, they wanted to keep things fresh but familiar. With the ratio of classic, iconic characters being 40% and obscure or original characters being 60% Even preexisting yet unpopular characters who never really hit the mark as A-listers in previous *Transformers* media were reimagined for this darker and more mature show – such as Arcee, Hardshell and Ultra Magnus.
- **Autobots Who Didn't Make Team Prime:** With this philosophy of "fresh but familiar" in mind, the writing team went back and forth and debated on who would be the final picks to join Optimus and Bee in their Five-Man Band lineup. Most of these characters that are listed below were excluded because they fulfilled the same archetypes as other Autobots already on the team and to avoid repetition as well as cut costs where they could, these unfortunate Autobot candidates were ultimately cut from Team Prime. Here are some of the Autobots who didn't the make final cut of Team Prime and why:
  - **Jazz:** Jazz was at one point considered to be a cool, music-loving, special-ops agent but he was dropped because the showrunners felt he overlapped too much with Bee's youthful vibe.
  - **Ironhide:** Concept art exists of an Ironhide-like character with a more rugged, war-hardened design. Like Bulkhead, he was envisioned as a tough veteran and a grizzled Wrecker. But he didn't make the cut because the showrunners felt his personality and role as the Big Guy overlapped heavily with Bulkhead, who was already designed as the big, brawny powerhouse and Gentle Giant of the team. Hasbro also felt – rather inaccurately – that there would be some confusion amongst children between Bayverse Ironhide and *Prime* Ironhide. Elements of Ironhide's tough, loyal warrior spirit were folded into Bulkhead and some of Ironhide's stoic traits also ended up in Ultra Magnus, who finally arrived in Season 3 as the disciplined soldier archetype.
  - **Ultra Magnus:** Ultra Magnus was considered to appear early on in the show as a possible field commander to balance Optimus' leadership, a role that ultimately ended up going to Ratchet instead. Ultra Magnus was saved and later introduced to Season 3, essentially being recycled.

- **Prowl:** Early concept art and discussions suggest Prowl was considered as the new Autobot recruit to join the team in Season 2. He would've been a ninja-like scout and strategist, similar to his *Animated* version. He was ultimately cut in favor of a rookie figure who would've fulfilled the Naïve Newcomer archetype, and this role as the sixth Autobot in Team Prime ultimately ended up being given to Smokescreen.
- **The Dinobots:** There were very early notes about possibly including the Dinobots as an Easter egg or special episode like a cameo or a flashback, but Hasbro ultimately decided to keep them in other media like the Bayverse and later R.I.D. instead of including them in *Transformers Prime*.
- **Decepticon Who Didn't Make The Nemesis Crew:**
  - **Shockwave:** He was always planned to appear, but his *formal* introduction was delayed until Season 3 due to budget restrictions and the story's focus.
  - **Blitzwing & Lugnut:** At one point, a duo of loyal Decepticon bruisers who would've fulfilled the Those Two Guys archetype was pitched. Either with Blitzwing and Lugnut from *Transformers Animated*, or with new equivalents. Instead, the writers opted to focus on obscure and original characters as Megatron's heavy hitters, thus leading to the creation of Knock Out, and the selection of Breakdown, a Decepticon who was basically a background character in G1.
  - **Reflector:** Some early notes for Decepticon spies included using a character based on Reflector who was a Decepticon that split into three bots. But this was dropped in favor of Laserbeak being Soundwave's detachable advanced surveillance.
  - **Demolishor:** Concept art exists of a more rugged Decepticon bruiser inspired by *Armada's* Demolishor but he was scrapped in favor of Breakdown instead.
  - **The Insecticons:** Insecticon swarms were part of an early concept art, and these did make it into the show as mindless soldiers.
- **New Autobots:** A challenge I would like to give myself is to do the same thing that the original writing team did with Shockwave, the Insecticons, and Ultra Magnus, and find a way to recycle these classic Autobot characters and organically introduce them in the later storylines but not just for the purpose of fan service. Like Shockwave and Ultra Magnus, I want the presence of these new Autobots in the story to actually be unique and to stand out amongst the various, colorful personalities that already make up Team Prime. I want these new Autobots to hold great significance over the plot and contribute to the arcs and developments of the other characters in a way that would be impossible without their inclusion. Especially with a show with such a tight budget, you really want to justify this new Autobot's existence and ensure that their role in the story isn't repetitive or easily replaceable with one of the preexisting Autobots on Team Prime. After all, if you're a writer who's trying to pitch why Jazz should be in *Predacons Rising*, but Jazz – despite having some cool character moments - doesn't literally do anything special that can't easily be replaced by Bumblebee or Smokescreen, then what's the point of spending money on him to include him in the story? Despite the passion of the fans, fan service is not enough to convince producers to invest their finances when their pockets are already getting tighter.
- **C.Y.L.A.S.:** In every episode where M.E.C.H. is featured as an antagonist, a different person within M.E.C.H.'s hierarchy will be leading the M.E.C.H. forces and calling themselves "Cylas". This mystery will linger throughout season 2 as Unit E and the Autobots – and by extension, the audience – is left to wonder why all of these people are claiming to be the same person. How many of them are there, truly? Ten? A hundred? A thousand? Which one of them is the true leader? We come to realize over the course of season 2

that “Cylas” is not just a shared codename amongst various individuals, it’s also an acronym. With each letter in Cylas’ name being the first letter of the individual leader’s name. So, in total, since there are five letters in the name Cylas, there will be five secret leaders of M.E.C.H. who each go by the codename C.Y.L.A.S. (We know that Leland Bishop’s codename is originally spelled “Silas” in the official version of the show, but for the sake of this rewrite and this creative decision, we altered the spelling to Cylas so as to achieve this acronym.) This writing choice to have Bishop share leadership of M.E.C.H. is a creative solution to the show’s budget concerns since they weren’t able to afford Clancy Brown for so many episodes. So having other M.E.C.H. leaders step into the spotlight will not only help flesh M.E.C.H. out, but it will also allow us to work around the budget constraints with *Prime*’s celebrity voice actors.

- C = Chumley
- Y =
- L = Leland Bishop
- A = Arkeville
- S = Snake

Despite the organization’s oligarchy, Leland Bishop will remain the de facto leader of M.E.C.H. for the audience – especially for their military operations – since he’s too iconic to have any other role. Dr. Arkeville will be the leader of M.E.C.H.’s science division, Snake will be in charge of weapons and supplies, Chumley handles the finances since his wealth helps privately fund the order and provides the personnel since they are in charge of marketing and recruitment.

- **M.E.C.H.’s Role:** Arkeville will be the mad scientist responsible for capturing and dissecting Breakdown and will most likely be killed by Bishop after the general is surgically fused with Breakdown’s body and lets the power get to his head. Chumley and Airchanid will be kindred spirits who have a mutual understanding as they’re both hunters who have an appreciation for the hunt, overcoming challenges, slaying their prey, and earning trophies. Chumley may or may not be also murdered by Bishop during his killing spree, with Bishop making some smug comment about hunters or prey to Chumley before taking his life. Snake will survive as he flees Bishop’s rampage and goes into hiding, where he later learns that Bishop was just using M.E.C.H. as a means to an end to achieve his own goals – which will remain a secret until the right time.
- **Jack vs Vince:** At school, Jack hangs out with a group of geeky kids who love engineering and working with their hands but are socially awkward. They probably like to play wargames similar to *Warhammer 40K* and collect action figures, which in turn causes them to get picked on, teased, and bullied at school. These kids include Elise, Jess, and Marty. Jack is considered a loser, being that guy who works at a burger place and hangs out with geeks who respect him. I do have one idea for a Jack-centric subplot in Season 2 where Vince (the bully from the drag races) talks shit about Raf to his friends after the school hosts some kind of memorial for their tragically deceased student. I figured Vince would hang out with a tough crowd. They’re all bullies, juvenile delinquents and petty criminals like shoplifters, carjackers, hard partiers, etc. When Miko overhears Vince’s comments about Raf in shop class, she confronts Vince in the middle of kids using power tools on their projects and warns him to shut his mouth. This verbal altercation leads to Miko snapping and she attacks Vince, and the fight obviously doesn’t go well in Miko’s favor. That’s when Jack steps in, standing up to the bully and heightening their rivalry as crowds begin chanting for both Vince and Jack equally. It appears Jack’s wins at the drag races got around school and it earned him some street cred, making him just as respected as Vince is feared. Jack humbles Vince by using some hand-to-hand combat techniques he

learned from his Unit E/Autobot training. It'd be really satisfying to see Jack beat the shit out of Vince and humiliate him (ex: slam his face into lockers, using lunch tray to smack him, kicking his knee in and flooring him with an uppercut, etc.) Obviously, the fight gets broken up by teachers and staff and everyone gets suspended. Although, I do want to make it a point here that the principals and counselors are not blind to what is going on. They know that this is an emotional reaction from losing Raf and everything is still raw. Jack is mostly a good kid, and he has a clean record. This is his first offense. As opposed to Vince, who is on the verge of being expelled and has always been trouble. Miko is in the same boat as Vince, since she's constantly skipping detention and just keeps racking up disciplines on her record. The principal gives Jack a shorter suspension than Vince and Miko and assigns him to grief therapy with the school counselor. June will tear Jack a new one when he gets home, since she heard from the principal what happened. But when June hears the full story from Jack after he snaps back at her, she softens up and tries to offer emotional support and guidance. She tries to embrace Jack, but he shrugs her off. She then goes in for a deeper hug, squeezing him tight, and Jack finally gives in and lets out the quiet tears he's been holding back. Cut to Jack getting off his closing shift at K.O. Burger only to get jumped by Vince and his friends in the parking lot (either Sierra or Jack's friend Marty could be present or not. If Sierra was present, she was probably meeting Jack after work to go on a date. She could be the one to call the police if Marty is not around. If Marty is present, as he came to visit Jack during the slow hours of his closing shift to talk about his character sheet for their upcoming RPG campaign, then he could call the police instead of Sierra). Despite putting up a good fight, Jack gets overwhelmed and pummeled. The bullies are about to walk away until Vince pulls out a pocketknife. They freak out and tell Vince to calm down. Vince just said he wanted to teach Jack a lesson. They already hurt him. They don't need this kind of heat. But Vince's pride is too wounded from his humiliation at school, and he wants to get even. He's about to stab Jack when the cops arrive and arrest Vince - but the bullies scatter and manage to get away.

- **Jack Becomes a Football Player:** Without Team Prime to keep Jack busy, he gets involved with sports and becomes an athlete instead. Over summer, he engages in motorcross racing since he is used to high-speed motorcycle rides with Arcee and finds it hard to engage in anything else. Once school starts back up, Sierra will convince Jack to try out football so that they can be close and spend more time together since she's a cheerleader. Jack is hesitant since he prefers riding, but he ultimately gives in, and he makes the team as a wide receiver. While the team is running drills during practice, Jack takes his position. He's focused but visibly uncertain. The QB, a confident, popular kid named Logan, calls out the play. Jack speaks up, "Hey, maybe we should try - ", but he gets cut off by Logan, who smirks at him. "Dude, just run the route. Leave the thinking to me." Jack shrugs it off, sprints downfield, but Logan ignores him and throws to another receiver. Jack's frustration builds. Cut to the middle of a football game where Jack's team is executing the exact same play, and he's open, but Logan purposely overthrows. Setting Jack up for failure. His inability to catch the ball costs the team the game and the rest of the team blames Jack for the loss. Later at dinner, June asks Jack how the game went, and he vents to her, telling her, "After all the stuff with the bots, I thought this would be easy...but I'm just another outsider." The next day at school, Jack slams his locker shut as he recounts the latest game to Sierra. "I'm wide open half the time, but Logan won't even look at me. And when he does, he overthrows it just to prove I'm not cut out for this." Sierra tries to be supportive and reassuring, "It'll get better. Maybe you just have to keep showing him you're worth passing to." Jack shakes his head, "I'm not sure I even *want* to anymore." In class, Devon - one of the wide receivers - sits next to Jack and makes a

comment about Jack dragging the rest of the team down. Later on at lunch, Jack and Sierra are sitting at a bench sharing a soda, sharing his interaction with Devon to her. Sierra asks if Jack still wants to play, and he confesses. “Honestly? I only joined the team because...well, you’re a cheerleader, and I wanted to be closer to you. I thought it’d make me...fit in”, he tells her. Sierra looks sad but nods, “Jack, I love that you’d do that for me. But if it’s not you, don’t force it. I want you to be happy – football or no football.” Jack looks down, feeling the weight of this. Cut to the locker room, with the team clearing out after practice. Jack approaches Coach Ramirez, working on his clipboard. “Coach, I wanted to talk to you about...maybe stepping down. I don’t think football is really my thing.” Coach looks up, “Hmm? Darby?” confused that he is even hearing this kind of talk from Jack, “What makes you say that?” Jack looks away, uncomfortable. He shrugs, “I don’t know...I guess I’m only on Varsity because I’m a junior...and I’ve never even played before –”, but he gets cut off by the Assistant Coach barging in. “Coach! Logan’s out – tore the rotator cuff in his shoulder. Just got off the phone with mom and doc says he’s done for the season! What do you wanna do for tomorrow’s game?” Coach Ramirez turns to Jack, narrowing his eyes thoughtfully. Cut to the next game, where the atmosphere in the stadium is tense. The scoreboard shows that Jack’s team is down, and their momentum is slipping. Coach Ramirez pulls Jack aside, “You’re the backup, Darby. You know the plays. You’re smart and you can keep your head on straight when the heat is on – I’ve seen it. You’re our guy.” Jack hesitates, looks at Sierra in the stands, who mouths “you got this”. Jack takes a deep breath and straps on his helmet. Cut to the final quarter. Jack lines up under center, his teammates wary but hopeful. Jack sees the defense shift and remembers how he learned to adapt with the Autobots. We cut to a montage where he makes smart throws, short and accurate, building trust with each play. The wide receiver he once competed with – Devon – nods at him after a tough catch, “nice one, Darby. Keep it comin’.” Cut to the final play. Jack scrambles as he sees an opening and he runs it in by himself, winning the last touchdown of the game and scoring a win for Memorial High. Cut to the locker room after the game where Jack’s teammates surround him, clapping him on the back and cheering, “Darby, you’re a freakin’ natural, man!” and “Yo, the quiet kid just straight-up ran the field!” Jack exchanges a knowing look with Coach Ramirez, who nods with pride. Jack’s smile fades for a second – remembering why he wanted to quit. But he straightens up. Outside the stadium, Sierra runs up to Jack and hugs him, “so...does this mean you’re sticking around, quarterback?” Jack replies, “yeah...I think I’m finally ready to own it.”

- **Miko’s Role:** At school, Miko likes to hang out with rebellious and unorthodox people who don’t conform to societal norms. Metal nerds, goths, vegans, and queer people. Think of characters like Sam Manson from *Danny Phantom*. Miko is considered to be a weirdo by a lot of high school cliques, but she is loved by her niche friend group.
- **Optimus x Arcee;** Delve into the romance between Cybertronians and the fact that Arcee – as the composite character for all of the G1 FemBots – will take Elita-One’s place as Optimus’ love interest in our season 2 rewrite. We can establish and build on the suggested romance presented in the episode *Scrapheap* if we rework it and move it to season 2’s slate. After Orion regains his memories and returns as Optimus, Arcee takes him aside for a quiet moment. She does this when Optimus is working late one night, vigorously typing away on Ratchet’s computer as he works on decrypting old files. “Optimus”, Arcee says softly. He glances over his shoulder, stoic as ever. “Arcee”, he greets flatly. “I...thought I’d find you here. Can we...talk?”, she asks. Optimus sees that her face is tired, but there is a softness in her optics. “Of course”, he says as he gives a gentle nod and turns to give his full attention to her. She takes a hesitant breath before speaking,

“when you were gone...as Orion Pax...everything fell apart. We tried to hold it together – Bee, Ironhide...even Ratchet. But...there was so much doubt. So much fear”, she pauses, looking down as she holds her arm warily, “I don’t think we realized how much we relied on you until it was too late.” Optimus absorbs this in silence. A flicker of sadness passes his optics. “I have failed to prepare you all for the possibility of my absence. That must change.” Arcee looks downcast, “I thought we were lost with you...I was lost.” Optimus steps closer, his voice calm yet resolute, “I will ensure that each of you – not just Bumblebee – are equipped to lead, should that time come again. The Matrix must never be the only source of guidance.” Arcee’s optics widen slightly, “You really mean that, don’t you?” Optimus’ voice drums, “Yes”. “But without you – without a Prime to lead us – what are we?” Arcee asks somewhat anxiously. “Arcee, a Prime’s burden is not only to protect – but to inspire. To make others strong enough to stand when our leaders are no longer able to. The Autobots must always be more than the Prime who leads them. Even me”, Optimus answers matter-of-factly. She searches his face and sees a flicker of something, “Optimus...there’s something you’re not saying. I know you. I can see it.” Prime hesitates, looking away for a moment, “there is...a truth I have kept from you all. A truth I believed best left unspoken.” He meets her gaze squarely, his voice dropping lower, “When I took up the Matrix once more, it did more than restore my memories as Optimus Prime. It restored...everything. I am not merely a successor of the first Primes, chosen just like the others before me. I am...the Thirteenth of the original Primes.” Arcee’s jaw drops, and her eyes widen with shock, “the Thirteenth...? But that would mean...you were one of the first beings to ever walk on Cybertron...you’re older than civilization itself...”. Optimus nods gravely, “I was created by Primus himself to stand with the other Twelve. But I chose to relinquish that divine Spark...to walk among my people as one of them.” Arcee processes this, “you...gave that up? All of it?” “I did. I believed that to lead...I needed to understand the struggles of every spark. I lived as Orion Pax, never knowing the weight I once carried. Until the Matrix restored it”, Optimus answers as his voice lowers and his tone becomes almost apologetic, “I did not tell the others because...I feared that it would set me apart again. I chose to stand among you, not above you.” There’s a pause. “Optimus, you’re more than a Prime to me. You always have been”, she confesses. “Arcee...I am still learning what it means to carry that truth – and to walk among those I hold close. But...know this. My spark may be ancient, but in all these cycles, I have never regretted this path that I have chosen.” “Then let me walk it with you”, Arcee reaches up, resting her hand on his chestplate – the soft glow of the Matrix behind it. Optimus covers her hand with his massive fingers – gentle, tender. They share a quiet, powerful look with Optimus’ resolve shining through and Arcee’s warmth to match it.