

REWRITING TRANSFORMERS PRIME SEASON 3 NOTES

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.

- **My Sources:** The majority of the information provided in this doc comes from leaked concept art and from interviews with writers like Duane Capizzi, Glen Murakami and Sam Register, and art director David Hartman.
- **Overview:** While *Transformers Prime* suffered from major studio interference throughout its entire existence, season 3 experienced the *most* interference. This was due to the fact that Joshua Lamb became the new Senior Design Director and his new vision for the show (such as focusing heavily on the dragon motif and relabeling the show as “Beast Hunters”) created all kinds of drama for everyone involved. His last-minute changes to season 3 clashed strongly with HasLab’s ongoing initiative to make new *Transformers* content. They were really upset that the *Transformers Prime* toys they had been conceptualizing such as the Predacon raptors and wolf-hybrids would no longer be in the show thanks to Lamb’s changes to season 3’s design language as he prioritized streamlined models and topline cohesion by deemphasizing more radical coloring and sidelining potentially flashy yet complex designs in favor of simpler transformations and a more muted and gritty color palette for the Predacons who would now be aerial mythological creatures akin to dragons. Hasbro Studios was also upset that season 3 went through such a significant rewrite practically overnight – discarding all of the pre-production work they had been working on. Needless to say, everyone was upset not necessarily with the changes themselves (although I’m sure some people disagreed with Lamb’s creative direction altogether), but by how much chaos they created due to the bad timing that they were incorporated. From a collaborative standpoint, I can only imagine how aggravating and stressful it must have been to adapt to this new model and still meet the deadline. Which explains why so much of season 3’s final draft of the story was rushed. Because of how much of a mess the production of season 3 turned out to be, Hasbro decided to step in and announced that TFP would end with season 3. Plus, on top of all of this, season 3 experienced a significant budget cut because *The Hub Network* was losing money. Which also caused season 3’s lineup of 26 episodes to be cut in half, condensing down to 13 episodes in total. Many episodes were condensed from two-part arcs into single episodes, losing subtlety and pacing. It’s also why a lot of subplots were either abandoned or rushed. These abandoned arcs included a deeper dive into Cybertron’s organic past and the true relationship between the Predacons and the Cybertronians, as well as Smokescreen’s coming-of-age as a Prime candidate, Predaking’s disillusionment arc as memories of his first life as an ancient warrior king would have started coming back to him, Shockwave would have also had an arc, and both Starscream and Knock Out’s personal stories intersecting with the new beast threat would have been included. While the rushed subplots that were pressured to wrap things up due to financial restrictions included Airachnid’s subplot as well as the Insecticons. Even though the writers planned on a fourth season, I ultimately think that this was the best decision to have taken. Not just from a practical behind-the-scenes standpoint, but from a creative standpoint as well. I think a 4th season would have really hurt TFP’s pacing and storytelling and dragged out the show to be longer than it needed to be. 3 seasons honestly feels like the sweet spot.

- **The Predacons' Original Plans:** In the original, uncut version of season 3, the Predacons were meant to be an ancient, almost forgotten part of Cybertronian history. Rather than just “monsters”, they were supposed to be a tribal faction with a unique culture and philosophy, tied closely to Cybertron’s prehistoric past and the planet’s natural forces. Their existence is a shadowy part of the Transformers’ collective memory, almost like an ancient civilization that was exiled or sealed away. Instead of mindless aggression, the Predacons would’ve had motives grounded in their survival in this new modern age, revenge for the Cybertronians’ past transgressions, and reclaiming what they see as their rightful place on either Cybertron or Earth (or both). For example, the Predacons would see themselves as guardians of natural order, opposing the corruption they would see in both the Autobot and the Decepticons. With the Autobots, the perceived corruption would be more political, whereas the Decepticons’ corruption would be more physical due to their use of Dark Energon. But the faction of Predacons wouldn’t be monolithic. Within the new Predacon clones, there would be tensions – with some members such as Skylynx advocating for peaceful coexistence and alliances, while others such as Darksteel or even Predaking push for a cleansing purge on all “corrupted” Cybertronians. This internal division would create drama and provide opportunities for alliances and betrayal. Not to mention, early concept art showed Predacons with more tribal, primal designs, and not just as mechanical beasts.
- **Predacon Drones:** According to art director David Hartman, Hasbro had toy ideas for Predacon drones, suggesting that these Predacon protoforms would’ve been less intelligent and more beast-like soldiers used by the Decepticons. In early drafts of the story, Predaking was meant to awaken a whole army of Predacons from stasis pods or cloning chambers – at least a dozen – before the Autobots and Decepticons forced them back into extinction. These drones included raptor-like Predacons that would’ve hunted in packs. (We can add on to this and lean more into the mythology angle by having Harpy Predacons act as aerial scouts and other named Predacon characters aside from Skylynx and Darksteel who transform into a chimera, a manticore, a hydra, Quetzalcoatl, Thunderbird, Cerberus, the Leviathan, a giant wolf, etc.)
- **Predaking’s Abandoned Arc:** Originally, Predaking was planned to be an ancient Cybertronian hero – a great warrior king of the Predacons who was betrayed and/or sealed away long ago. His resurrection through cloning would have had him start off as initially mindless and slowly regaining his memories of his past life over time as his identity would unfold across multiple episodes. As the memories gradually returned and Predaking’s past was slowly pieced together, he would be burdened by the sins of his people and a desire to restore honor to their name. Rather than just be a rage-driven warrior, Predaking would’ve exhibited layers of nobility, wisdom, and regret. He would have struggled between his primal instincts and his ancient memories of honor and leadership. There would be moments of dialogue or tensions with characters like Megatron and either Optimus or the new Prime who would’ve been Optimus’ successor, discussing ancient grievances, the fate of their civilizations, or shared history lost to time. Possibly, Predaking could influence or challenge the main characters’ views on war, honor, and survival. Predaking’s arc would provide emotional weight – a leader trying to revive a lost culture while grappling with violence he despises but cannot escape.
- **Smokescreens’ Abandoned Arc:** Smokescreen was originally going to have a much more prominent “rookie-to-leader” arc, showing how he matures and grows as a warrior. However, his journey was always intended to be in service to Optimus, not as a direct successor. Even though he briefly took up the Forge of Solus Prime to save Optimus’ life, the idea was to cement his role as a devoted second-in-command rather than be the next

Prime. In some of the writer's notes (never fully produced), there were hints that Smokescreen might step up as a field commander if Optimus was out of commission for an extended period. Still, the plan was always to keep Optimus as the main Prime figure, with Smokescreen maturing into more of a trusted knight – like a younger Ultra Magnus.

- **Bumblebee's Abandoned Arc:** Bee's voice was originally supposed to return earlier than the finale. There were early drafts where Megatron's experiments or Ratchet's medical efforts would've helped restore his voice, adding depth to his trauma and sense of self. Some scripts hinted at Bee wrestling with feeling sidelined or not being trusted in high-level battles because of his muteness (this could work really well in the rewrite in the case of Mad Dog and the rest of Unit E being unable to understand Bee and therefore not trusting him with any leadership roles). These scenes were cut for pacing but would've given Bee more emotional weight before his final "I have a voice!" moment.
- **Arcee's Abandoned Arc:** Arcee's revenge arc against Airachnid was going to have a bigger payoff, perhaps with a final duel or a more dramatic resolution. Early ideas explored Arcee's lingering guilt and PTSD from losing her partners (Tailgate and Cliffjumper). She might have had more scenes reflecting on her bond with Jack, almost like her was her chance to atone for past losses. These elements were largely overshadowed once Airachnid was removed from the main plot.
- **Bulkhead's Abandoned Arc:** Bulkhead's injuries from Season 2 were going to have lasting effects (possibly some form of paralysis/crippling to where his limp never goes away and his ability to run in his robot mode – and possibly even transform – is severely impaired), making him question his role as a warrior. There were early concepts where he'd need to learn to fight smarter, not just harder. Some drafts had him considering leaving the front lines to train the next generation of Autobots or to be a builder again.
- **13 Colonies:**