Interview with COMBINER WARS designer John Warden

Also inside: BotCon 2016
Louisville, Kentucky
April 7th-10th
On The Cover...
Combiner Wars Sky Reign!
Look at the amazing artwork for Transformers Collector’s Club.

From The Editor’s Desk...
The story 10 years in the making, finally reaches the tipping point with this issue’s groundbreaking installment! (Okay, you’d think we planned it this way, but it is amazing how everything fell in to place!) Check out Another Light Part 5 and then get ready for next issue, because the final chapter from this year’s story has even more surprises in store for you!

A big thank you to the UK show Roll Out Roll Call for inviting the TCC, and me personally, over to their show on Oct 3rd and 4th. By the time many of you have gotten this issue the show will have just wrapped, so make sure to stay tuned to Transformersclub.com for some of the highlights and a recap of our exclusive TCC UK panel. Transformers fan sites such as Seibertron.con, Allspark.com, and bwtf.com (to name a few) will have some great discussion about the panel, and any sneak peeks we MAY have revealed, so be sure to check them out!

Take Care!

Pete

“Are you moving?”
Go to the Club Store and update your address or call us with your new mailing address as soon as possible in order to help us keep your magazine coming without interruption. The Post Office does not forward 3rd Class mail. The phone number for the Transformers Collectors’ Club is 817-448-9863 Mon-Fri 9AM - 4:30PM Central time.

Making It Happen...

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Transformers Collectors’ Club: Your career began as a live actor then you alternated back and forth between that and voice over work. How do the two compare? Are there times when you have a preference for one over the other?

Mitchell Whitfield: That’s a great question. I’ve been pretty fortunate in my career to be able to transition between voice work and Theater/Television/Film, and each of the different mediums offers a unique reward; but there’s one thing that voice work has over all of the others: If you sound the part, you can be the part. As actors, we get used to being judged during the casting process before we utter a single word—too young, too old, too short, wrong look, etc. In the voice world, you’re only judged by how you sound so I get to play roles that I would never get the opportunity to play in live-action projects—and as an actor, that’s incredibly liberating. Don’t get me wrong, I love working in film, television and theater; but when it comes to having the freedom to do things you’ve never been allowed to do before, there’s nothing like voice work :).

TCC: Do you have any previous experience with the Transformers brand? When the original cartoon first aired, you were entering your twenties so you yourself may not have been a fan but did you have any younger siblings, children, or relatives who watched one of the Transformers cartoons growing up? How did they react to your being cast in Transformers: Robots in Disguise?

MW: Hey, don’t let my age fool you, I’m a tremendous man-child!! Seriously, I’ve been a Transformers fan for as long as I can remember. Beast Wars was one of my favorites. I also have two younger brothers, one of whom was a big Transformers fan; in fact, we both have a pretty decent bot collection (I still have two original Optimus Primals—one in its box, one that I can play with—I told you I was a man-child!) More than anything, my kids were really excited about their dad getting to be an Autobot—and as a voice actor, being able to work on projects that you feel good about your own kids watching is really rewarding. I mean, c’mon, how many kids get to tell their friends that their father is a Transformer!

TCC: You have a very distinct voice, but whether it’s been Rachel’s ex-fiancée on Friends, Stan from My Cousin Vinny, Donatello from Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles & TMNT, Gun from Legend of Korra, or, of course, Fixit from Transformers: Robots in Disguise, you have played many different sorts of characters. What has been a couple of your favorite archetypes to bring to life?

MW: In the live-action world, getting to play Stan in My Cousin Vinny was definitely a career-changer and opened a lot of doors for me—it was also a blast to do; nearly 25 years later (man, I’m old!), Ralph Macchio and I still talk about it. Friends is another one that stands out; to this day, I have people coming up to me saying, “Hey, you’re that jerky Orthodontist!” (You gotta love fan honesty). But being a Transformers is a whole other deal. Anyone who read your Q&A with Khary Payton (Grimlock) got a pretty good sense of what it was like for us to step into the booth with Peter Cullen for the first time—and to say that I was squealing like a schoolgirl is probably incredibly insulting to squealing schoolgirls. Come to think of it, Barry (from Friends) and Fixit are pretty similar; sure, one is a robot with a tick and the other is an Orthodontist with commitment issues—but they’re both funny and indecisive. So if we’re talking archetypes, I guess the whole neurotic thing has worked well for me over the years!

TCC: In Transformers: Robots in Disguise, Bumblebee struggles with his attempts to find his leadership style while Fixit works away in the background, repairing computer systems and providing information to help the team capture the escaped Decepticons. But what sort of dynamic is forming between you and the other voice actors in the recording booth? We’ve heard from Khary Payton and Will Friedle about the fun and antics inside the booth, is that something you take part in? Do you have any particular story to share?

MW: There’s no way to avoid being a part of it! There are a lot of jobs in this industry that are just that—jobs; but from the second we all stepped into the booth together, there was instant chemistry, a sense of friendship and family that you could never create inorganically. Thankfully, we do this show as an ensemble; and because of that, there are things that happen spontaneously during a session that you would never get if we didn’t get along so well. I think one of my favorite things to do when we record is watch Ted McGinley (Denny). Not only is Ted incredibly talented, he’s also one of the nicest human beings on the planet; and because he hasn’t done as much animation as the rest of us, he watches everyone’s performances with a genuine sense of wonder and appreciation that’s genuinely infectious. I also really like working with Will Friedle and Khary Payton (they asked me to say that.)

TCC: Fixit’s glitches in his speech mechanism make for some interesting and unique dialog. What has been the learning curve with owning that quirk?

MW: Oh my, the dirk…lurk…quirk!! I took ownership of the glitch pretty quick; in fact, I’m pretty sure I drive our writers a little crazy by constantly asking if I could change the words. I’ve gotten a bit particular about the rhyme and number of syllables being just right! Thank goodness I’m surrounded by friends willing to give me a not-so-gentle “nudge” to get me back on track…

TCC: The role of Fixit is your first time acting in a Transformers universe. We know you’re just getting started with Fixit, but are there any other characters from the mythos you would like to see yourself tackle one day?

MW: Hmm, being such a Beast Wars fan, if they were to bring it back in any way, I’d love to be able to be able to say “Tarantulas… TERRORIZE!” On the Maximal side, I think Rattrap would be fun to voice, especially as a born-and-raised New Yorker.

TCC: Lastly, what is your favorite thing about Fixit as a character and what do you hope people take away from him?

MW: The thing I love about Fixit is his endless enthusiasm, even though he stays in the background most of the time. Not everyone gets to be the captain of the team, or the one who gets the bulk of the recognition; and while Fixit may not be the biggest or the strongest, his knowledge of the Alchemor and its prisoners proves invaluable throughout the show, and he, in his own quiet way, becomes as important a member of the team as any of the other Autobots, and I think a lot of viewers will be able to relate to him, as well as laugh with him.
This year at retail, Transformers fans of all ages have been thrilled by the Transformers Generations: Combiner Wars toy line. The figures have been hugely successful not only at capturing the look and feel of the retro characters and combination gimmick, but also at updating the figures by utilizing modern toy engineering. We at the Transformers Collectors’ Club have had the opportunity to talk with John Warden, one of the lead designers for the Combiner Wars toys, asking him just what went into these Combiners that are striking so many chords with the fandom.

Transformers Collectors’ Club: With the success of the Generations line, when did the team decide that it was the right time to not just reintroduce Combiners, but to focus the whole Generations line on them for a year plus?

John Warden: Great question. With Generations, we always want to connect with fans on a deep level, to help fans get the best versions of the characters they love. Combiners like Superion, Menasor, and Bruticus required larger bots to form their torsos, so we used the Voyager assortment to help push the scale/proportion on the character. To do it right, we needed to make sure that each ‘Bot was done well and each was in itself a fun toy with a good level of conversion.

With our new waves of product, we wanted to make sure we included new and young fans as well as our long time fans. Transformers is a wonderful universe, and it’s one that our fans love to share with their children to pass along that legacy.

And with the introduction of the Combiner Wars comic miniseries with IDW, and the upcoming news of the Machinima animated content, that universe continues to grow!

TCC: Hasbro has been experimenting with modern design combiner toys since Energon, with attempts at the play pattern in Power Core Combiners and the Fall of Cybertron Combaticons. What did the design team learn from these previous attempts when starting Combiner Wars?

JW: One of the huge benefits of working on Transformers is that our design team is able to work directly with some of the experts who created the play patterns found in toy lines like Energon and Fall of Cybertron. In fact, some of these designers are the same guys who worked on the original 1980’s toy line as well. So, the development is collective, and the inventions continue to improve. Our mission with Combiner Wars was to improve the “play” and the poseability of the large-sized Combiner, while delivering on scale and proportion. Fall of Cybertron taught us that the joint system needed to be more robust and needed to withstand long-term posing on shelf as well as vigorous play from our target age boy consumer. Energon was a cool and unique play pattern to Transformers at it’s time, but it unfortunately lacked the characters that we know fans and kids connect with.

TCC: After your “core” combiner teams of the Aerialbots, Stunticons, Protectobots and the other sub groups that were part of the vintage line, what was the thought
process behind bringing some other classic characters (i.e. Sky Lynx, Cyclonus) in to the world of Combination?

JW: Combiner Wars is so much more than just the original combiners our fans already know and love from the original 1980's toy line and entertainment. Our new Generations line has captured the imagination of a whole new generation of fans as well! The IDW series brings to life the idea of “the Enigma of Combination” which grants ordinary Transformers the power to form Combiner Teams. And to our new fans and kids, Combiner Wars is a fun toy that lets you combine any Deluxe Class or Voyager Class Transformers together to form your own big ‘bot. To make that play pattern seamless across the line, all of the Voyager and Deluxe class characters needed to be Combiner system compatible. Any toy we create has the potential of creating a creative spark in the mind of a fan, young or old.

TCC: What Combiner were you personally eager to make, but just could not get it into the final product line?” “Predaking, Piranhacon, Abominus are seemingly absent from Combiner Wars. Were the animal Combiners just not feasible for the line or was it a priority issue, wanting to focus on the more classic vehicle Combiners?

JW: You took the words right out of my mouth: Predaking. I loved Predaking as a kid, and I loved the other Monster/Beast Combiner teams as well. I’d even love to bring to life the idea of a Dinobot Combiner team in toy form.

Every figure we create needs to be able to be incorporated into the greater whole of the Combiner Wars line. To create a Beast Combiner, we would have had to dedicate a full wave of product to pay off the aesthetics of the original characters and Combiners that fans love.

Secondly, we wanted to focus the line on “terrestrial” forms (such as helicopters, jets, cars) that we knew would be easily identified by the new fans (kids) and would give a point of difference from the Transformers: Robots in Disguise toyline, which has a lot of Beast/Monster Alt Forms.

TCC: As a fan and on a personal note, which Combiner Wars team did you enjoy working on the most?

JW: Hands down, the Protectobots. As a kid I always loved the Protectobot team, and Defensor as a character. The colors as well as the vehicle forms hold a special place in my heart, and re-imagining them for this new toyline has been the opportunity of a lifetime.
In 1986, Hasbro had asked Takara to invent a new Triplechanger concept for the following season. Takara’s suggestion was a reversal of the previous concept: this time there would be one vehicle mode, but two robot modes. The project was moved ahead with the development codename “split personality,” but at the prototype stage it was changed to the more child-friendly “Doublespy.” This name would carry on to the final name for the Japanese market, while in the west, it became known as the more imaginative “Punch/Counterpunch.”

The first prototype Hasbro received from Takara was a red sports car that transformed by splitting down the middle, with the sides aligning to form either a primarily red Autobot or purple Decepticon. Although the prototype boasted an extremely unique design, it was deemed too impractical to put into production due to the fact that a very narrow part held the halves of the body together. Hasbro requested a new prototype with a somewhat simpler transformation, and a smaller size closer to that of previous Triplechangers.

The second prototype satisfied Hasbro’s expectations, and yielded a design featuring the inventive “cap” gimmick, where exposing one face would conceal the face on the other side of the head. Similarly, the arms and legs were created to allow the same parts to function in two distinct ways, accomplishing the Doublespy feature without resorting to an overly complex design. At this point, the toy very closely resembled the Punch/Counterpunch design with which fans are now familiar.

Takara continued work on this design until a new directive from Hasbro asked that costs be reduced on all designs currently in production. Although the general design of the toy was retained, several significant features had to be omitted in order to cut costs: The four-wheeled rolling configuration for the Autobot robot mode was removed, as were all die-cast metal parts. The detachable mask was eliminated, and the guns switched to smaller ones.

Thanks to these modifications, Punch/Counterpunch was finally able to see the light of day. The concept proved to be a popular one upon release, and so the following year another prototype was created around the same concept. Rather than a car, the planned vehicle mode was a Grumman X-29 jet. Unfortunately, this prototype was ultimately passed over for development into a product, but concept art for it can be seen in the pages of Transformers Generations Deluxe. It is said that the unrealized Doublespy directly influenced the development of the Powermaster Doubledealer, another Transformer with a single vehicle mode transforming into modes of opposing factions.

Although Punch/Counterpunch appeared in a wide variety of Transformers media, such as The Rebirth and the Japanese series The Headmasters, it is interesting to note that the character has never received a central role, or really much characterization at all. And yet the design was iconic enough that the TCC-exclusive remake famously sold out in a matter of hours. It may be that the true significance of the Doublespy is as a sort of evolutionary link between Triplechangers and larger multi-mode Transformers such as Doubledealer and Overlord. More than a character, he remains as a benchmark of the impressive design innovation that occurred over the span of just a few short years.

From Another Time and Place Episode 01: The Split Personality of Punch/Counterpunch by Andrew Hall
"It was long ago that Solus Prime forged the Terminus Blade to give us - the Thirteen - the ability to transport ourselves from one universe to the next in our efforts to confront the Primordial Unicron Entity!"

"As these things happen, technology made the Blade obsolete and it was cast aside with not one of us considering the repercussions should it fall into the hands of Cybertronians who might come into being after us."

"Conversely, the Star Saber was never forgotten. Its power proved too much even for the Thirteen and one of our more jealous brothers turned on his siblings in an attempt to obtain it."

"To ensure that our internal dispute did not rise to that of civil war..."

"...Solus Prime took her forge and shattered the blade into five pieces."

"I, Nexus Prime, was also split into pieces."

"Each of my five components took one of those pieces so that it might be scattered across the Multiverse to ensure that no one individual would possess them again."

"Now with so many victims from the destruction wrought by Ultra Magnus, however, the restoration of the Star Saber has become a necessity."

"While I mourn those universes already gone, I will make certain that the ones that sit on the edge of collapse will not crumble into the void. No one else will perish. By Primus, let no one else perish..."

"With the harmony restored to the damaged streams, I seal the doorways between universes."

"The locks are strengthened, the doors thickened, the wall is hardened."

"The fluidity between universes will no longer exist."

"Travel will only be available to the very select few."

"As a moth cannot resist his nature to fly towards a light, my brothers and sisters amongst the Thirteen are drawn by my actions."

"I know that some come to stop me, but I also know that most come to aid me. They too have seen enough of the bedlam that has spread within the Multiverse."

"Part Five - Out of the One, Many: Another Light."

Jesse Wittenrich & Pete Sinclair - Writers; Eryck Merri - Pencils & Inks; Van Hent - Colors; Jesse Wittenrich - Letters; Pete Sinclair - Managing Editor.
“WE AMONGST THE SINGULARITY ARE NOT SO SPECIAL THAT THE EFFECTS OF THIS DIVISION DO NOT HAVE THEIR INFLUENCES ON US.”

“AS I GLANCE TOWARD THE NOW-VISIBLE HORIZON OF THE MULTIVERSE - WHAT I CAN SEE OF IT PAST THE NEONATE BARRIERS - I OBSERVE THAT WE THIRTEEN CAN NO LONGER EXIST AS SINGULAR BEINGS.”

“PRIMUS AND UNICRON TOO ARE CUT INTO FRAGMENTS WITH EACH FRAGMENT CAST INTO A SEPARATE UNIVERSE.”

...MY FORM.

“THE UNICRON'S THREATEN AND HOWL, BUT THEY ARE A FRACTION OF THE EVIL HE ONCE POSSESSED.”

“AND, SURPRISING EVEN TO HIMSELF, THERE IS AMONGST THOSE FRAGMENTS A GOODNESS...”

“SEPARATED FROM DARKNESS THAT ONE SPARK OF LIGHT IS GIVEN FORM...”

“THE EFFECTS ARE UNIQUE WITH EACH INSTANCE, BUT THE DIVISION OF THE UNIVERSES MEANS THAT WE ALSO ARE DIVIDED, SPLIT INTO COUNTLESS PIECES, AND THROWN WHEREVER AND WHENEVER EACH TIMELINE WILL ACCEPT US.”

“PRIMUS AND UNICRON TOO ARE CUT INTO FRAGMENTS WITH EACH FRAGMENT CAST INTO A SEPARATE UNIVERSE.”

“...MY FORM.”

“WHILE IN THE OTHER UNIVERSES THE OTHER VERSIONS OF ME SEEK ENTROPY I SEEK ENTROPY, I SEEK TO PROGRESS BEYOND THE CHAOS.”

“THERE IS NOTHING BEYOND CHAOS - I KNOW CHAOS, I AM CHAOS!”

“WHEREVER I AM, I LEAVE... NOTHING!”

“THERE IS TRUTH, ENLIGHTENMENT...”

“THAT IS WHAT YOU ARE ALL PROGRESSING TOWARDS, AND IT WILL LEAD TO IMPROVEMENT BOTH WITHIN YOURSELVES AND OUT AMONGST THE WORLDS YOU WILL INHABIT.”

“OH BIG BALL OF HONESTY, ENLIGHTEN ME THIS... WHY THE SCRAP SHOULD I CARE?”

“BECUSE I CAN CLEAR THE CHAOS FROM YOUR MIND AND SHOW YOU THE TRUTH OF YOUR EXISTENCE.”

“THAT SOUNDS LIKE BRAINWASHING TO ME, AND I LIKE MINE AS PERFECTLY FILTHY AS IT IS NOW.”

“I DO NOT SEEK TO CONTROL YOU; I WISH YOU TO REMAIN YOURSELF ONLY THROUGH THE COMBINATION OF EACH CYBERTRONIAN'S INDIVIDUALITY CAN KNOWLEDGE BE OBTAINED.”
IT'S LIKE YOU'RE TRYING TO GIVE ME PROCESSOR-SWITCHES THROUGH SHEER BOREDOM.

I HAVE SEEN YOUR GREATEST VICTORY.

MY... MY WHAT?

SHOW IT TO ME. SHOW ME HOW I CRUSH MY ENEMIES. SHOW ME NOW!

VERY WELL. PROCEED. ON YOUR WAY TO ENLIGHTENMENT.

IT'S...

IT'S... BEAUTIFUL...

I ACCEPT YOUR TERMS, UNICRON.

I ACCEPT!

EXCELLENT. THEN ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE YOUR NEW ADJUNCTS, THE KNIGHTS OF UNICRON....

X-BRAWN, THE CHAMPION.

CHECKPOINT, THE GUARDIAN....

...AND HIS PATRISIBLE AUTOTROOPERS.

AS FOR YOU....
BEHOLD. NOVA PRIME.

MY HEAD. THE CLUTTER IS GONE. I FEEL...

SANITY.

NOW GO, MY CHILD. THIS UNIVERSE HAS SEEN ENOUGH DEMOLITION. STOP RODIMUS AND HIS AUTOBOTS FROM SPREADING IT FURTHER.

I SWORE AN OATH TO YOU, UNICRON.

RODIMUS — AND THE CORRUPTION HE REPRESENTS — WON'T LAST MUCH LONGER. I WILL BRING AN END TO THIS.

"I BELIEVE YOU WILL, BUT I SENSE SOMETHING ELSE. ANOTHER LIGHT TO AD VOU IN THE COMING FIGHT."

"DID YOU... SEE THE LOOK ON HIS MUG WHEN GALVATRON PULLED THAT GUN ON HIM?"

"I COULDA TAKEN TEN THOUSAND VID-PEEPS OF THAT MOMENT THEY STILL WOULDN'T CAPTURE IT."

SHATTERED GLASS CYBERTRON.

AUTOBOT THRONE ROOM.

YOU'RE Mooks LOOK HERE, IT WAS LIKE THIS...

NO, WAIT, OPTIMUS HAD THAT SHIELD THING COVERIN' UP HIS FACE, SO IT WAS MORE THIS...

YOU MEAN LIKE THAT?"
I COULD DO THE STEREOTYPICAL GOOD GUY THING AND BORE YOU WITH A SPEECH ABOUT MORALITY AND JUSTICE, BUT I'M STILL NOT INTO MAKING FRIENDS.

BESIDES, I KNOW YOU, RODIMUS, YOU'D TUNE YOUR AUDIO RECEPTORS TO FADE HAYWAY THROUGH. SO I'LL JUST OFFER YOU THE CHANCE TO SURRENDER.

YOU HAVE ONE CHANCE. AFTER THAT, YOUR DISGRACEFULNESS WILL BE PURGED.

I JUST BEEN HANDED THIS GIG AND THERE ISN'T NO WAY I'M GIVIN' IT UP CUE SOME GREASER CAME BACK FROM THE DEAD.

KEEP ROLLING, NOW. WE'LL CLEAR A PATH.

RODIMUS, WE WILL END THIS MEGALOMANIA NOW!

WHAT'S UP WID' CHU? TALKIN' ABOUT MORALITY AND SCRAP. YOU'RE ACTIN' MORE SCREW-LOOSE THAN NORMAL.

WHAT I BELIEVED BEFORE — WHAT YOU BELIEVE NOW — IS FLAT OUT WRONG. WE'RE MEANT TO BE INSTRUMENTS OF PROGRESS, NOT THOSE OF DESTRUCTION.

WELL, AS CORNY AS YOU MAY THINK IT SOUNDS, I'VE BEEN SHOWN THE TRUTH.

THAT'S SOME PRIMO EXHAUST YOU'RE UNITIN'. - OOF -

THEN THAT IS YOUR LOSS. JUST AS THIS BATTLE WILL BE SOON.

WHOEVER PUT THAT DRIVE IN YOURS FUEL TANK, TELL EM I DON'T WANT NONE OF IT.

A PITY THAT AS THE HERO NOW, I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO COLLECT TROPHIES ANYMORE...

...YOUR BEARD WAS ALWAYS A CONVERSATION STARTER.

AH WELL... WE ALL CHANGE.
A logical hypothesis, my young Autobot. Partly logical at least.

I have chosen you, Rodimus. But I didn’t count on luck getting you here...

After all, if you refuse to embrace change yourself, how do you expect to influence others?

I guided your tumble deep into Cybertron—into my planet form—to give you a special task.

I have been stirred into... a new awakening. A new dawn on a new me. And, well, I’m finding I’m not quite a morning kind of planetary body, especially not when there are these... impurities running around. Being vulgar everywhere.

I want the impurities gone.

Wanton violence, brutality, and a little mass extinction... oh yes, that’s just where we start.

To be continued.
It's your typical American love story: Boy and girl meet. Boy and girl fall in love, go on adventure filled expeditions, visit exciting locales across the globe... all while fighting Cobra Commander and his ruthless organization of troopers bent on ruling the world!

When the Cobra terrorist organization was finally defeated, however, Warrant Officer Dashiell "Flint" Faireborn and intelligence agent Alison "Lady Jaye" Hart-Burnett found time to dedicate to a more peaceful life. One with a family. Their daughter Marissa Faireborn, inherited her mother’s astuteness and her father’s determination, allowing her to rise through the ranks of the military elite and eventually gain a post in G.I. Joe’s eventual, international replacement – the Earth Defense Command. Founded by Clayton “General Hawk” Abernathy, the E.D.C. was the perfect place for Captain Faireborn to showcase her piloting, sharpshooting, and command skills. It also gave her the opportunity to make many allies within the Autobot ranks, including the hot-headed Technobot Afterbreaker.

Villainy, nevertheless, still lurked in the shadows. While Cobra had been dismantled, its leader, the aforementioned Cobra Commander, had gone into hiding. Rather than risk exposure, he manipulated crime lords to do his bidding for him... The whole time permitting them to think that he was the one working for them. After Victor Drath’s failed attempt to destroy the Autobots and build a stronger crime ring, Cobra Commander – now calling himself “Old Snake” – realized that the key to restoring his former greatness lay within these giant robots from Cybertron.

His first attempt to harness the might of the Cybertronians was the familiarly-named Project Serpent O.R. Using the discarded remains of a Sweep – a group of lowly grunts within the Decepticon army – Old Snake constructed what he thought would be the greatest warrior ever built... However, as he was programming the robot with the intelligence profiles of Earth’s most notorious military minds from throughout history, the E.D.C. attacked the compound. During the skirmish, General Hawk fell into the brainwave scanner and had a duplicate copy of his personality uploaded into Serpent O.R. The resulting amalgamated digital brain rebelled against Old Snake and joined the Decepticons.

Old Snake managed to escape once again but he had not given up on his new dream for power. Not wanting to repeat his recent mistake, Old Snake forfeited one intelligent robot for squadrons of easily controlled Advanced Stealth B.A.T.s. Similar to the old battle android troopers under Cobra’s command, the Stealth B.A.T.s were relatively cheap to produce, and yet they still retained the most critical advantage possessed by the Cybertronians... Transformation. Capable of converting into an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), the Stealth B.A.T.s can infiltrate military bases and then switch to robot mode to conduct espionage. Or simply wreak havoc and destruction.

Can Marissa Faireborne, the E.D.C., and the Autobots stop Old Snake’s revitalization of his empire? Or is Cobra destined to wrap its coils around the Earth once more?

Check out page 16 to see how you can keep the story going with Marissa Faireborn, her Autobot partner Afterbreaker, Old Snake and the cold, ruthless Stealth B.A.T.s!
Soundwave was one of the first to join Megatron’s Decepticon uprising, and has faithfully served his commander ever since. He saw the Decepticons as Cybertron’s only chance to defeat the “uncool” Evil Autobots and end the destruction that they looked to spread across the planet’s surface.

During the battle which sprang from Optimus Prime’s first attempt to build an Ark to traverse the distance to Earth and enslave its inhabitants, Soundwave played a supporting role in intercepting Autobot transmissions and directing Decepticon troop deployment. In the Autobots’ second, more successful attempt to reach Earth, Soundwave came to the forefront of the fray, adopting an Earth mode and working alongside Heatwave and Blitzwing to spoil the Autobots from constructing a stellar spanner and obtain reinforcements from Cybertron. The fighting was fierce but quick, with the damage that the Decepticons caused to the spanner resulting in an explosion that flung the Autobot Blaster free from the Earth’s surface and stranded him on the orbiting moon.

After this encounter, Soundwave was recalled to Cybertron for a new mission. Rumors were running wild that Optimus Prime’s brother, Ultra Magnus, had escaped from a high-security Autobot prison on Paradron. Treadshot, the Decepticon with the most experience with Ultra Magnus, was tapped to lead a team to track down the Evil Autobot. Soundwave was selected as an addition to the squad along with Octopunch and Straxus, the Bard of Darkmount. They quickly picked up Ultra Magnus’ trail, but it led them somewhere unexpected; straight out of their own Universe and into a strange Mirror universe of sorts. One where the Autobots fought for the side of good and the Decepticons were the ones causing chaos and destruction!

Ultra Magnus had heard second-hand stories originally told by the mirror Cliffjumper about something called Rarefied Energon in the heroic Autobot’s home universe. And he wanted it. Treadshot managed to find and confront Ultra Magnus, though despite his best efforts, he was unable to fully prevent what came next. Ultra Magnus’ plan to extract the Rarefied Energon back to the Shattered Glass universe could not be stopped, though Soundwave was able to use Ultra Magnus’ advanced force field technology to at least keep the earth in one piece, preventing the destruction of the world’s inhabitants. Nonetheless, the Classicverse Earth was ripped from its universe, which then crumbled behind it. Soundwave had managed to save the Earth, but it was the sole surviving planet from an entire reality.

In the aftermath of this inter-universe invasion, and with disarray still abound, Starscream requested Soundwave report to the Decepticon outpost on Shattered Glass universe Earth immediately. Rodimus and the Evil Autobots there were planning a major attack and Soundwave was needed to repair several of the Decepticon security sensors before Rodimus could exploit the weakness. With the stellar spanner in disrepair and there not being enough time for an intergalactic voyage, Classicverse Wheeljack allowed the Decepticon access to his newly invented “mental spanner” which sent Soundwave’s consciousness through subspace where it found itself on Earth in a new body built by Starscream. Soundwave was ready to rock a new tune, however as he, Batbot, and Slugfest were on-site repairing one of the sensors, Blaster and the cassettes who had recently escaped from the moon with him attacked. Fortunately, a Solarbot – a mysterious cousin to Cybertronians from a far away galaxy who came to Earth to seek help – used his powers of radiation to thwart Blaster’s revenge.

With Blaster in retreat, the Solarbot explained to Soundwave that he was looking for a special team of six unique individuals who had knowledge that could save his race. In a moment of confusion, Soundwave gave the Solarbot information where to find the Seacons rather than the group in which the Solarbot was truly interested. Unaware of his error yet still proudful about his “good deed”, Soundwave returned to the preparations against Rodimus’ forces. What neither he, nor the rest of the Decepticons on Earth realized, was that Rodimus was expecting Optimus Prime and an entire extra platoon of Autobots to take the lead in the assault on Decepticon City. Though the Decepticons were not prepared for an attack of this magnitude, a timely transmission from Soundwave allowed Galvatron and the crew of The Annex to arrive and stop Optimus Prime before the damage to the city was catastrophic.
BIO

Soundwave believes that an effective Decepticon is a happy Decepticon, and so he opens each dawn with a blast of music downloaded from Earth’s prevailing top ten charts. Working like a globally renowned disk jockey, Soundwave masterfully—in his own opinion at least—weaves song after song, interspersing each with the latest tidbit of news or click-bait trivia factoid scoured from the corners of the internet. This dedication to his “craft” causes Soundwave to act less like the rest of his Decepticon teammates and more like the human teenagers with whom he finds himself spending much of his time. He is much more interested in fun, parties, and simply “being excellent to one another” than in fighting and peace-keeping, which distances himself even further from his Decepticon brethren.

Although the changes to his exo-structure have mostly been out of his control, Soundwave still enjoys refreshing his appearance every once and a while. He’s been a Cybertronian communications block, an Earth automobile, and now his latest body is a retro-custom cassette player built by Starscream to meet Soundwave’s specifications. Although he’s now accustomed to this current form, Soundwave is already dreaming of what he could look like next.

WEAPONS / ABILITIES

Since his onboard communications array is always on and constantly searching for new frequencies, Soundwave can automatically connect to any radio waves, subspace pulses, cellular and wifi signals, and any other wireless transmissions that he encounters. This means that his head is perpetually abuzz with information and data, to the point where it would drive any other Cybertronian insane… But Soundwave’s carefree, “go with the flow” attitude allows him to navigate the sea of inane chatter and images with clarity, and pick out the important content with ease.

The sonic cannon mounted on Soundwave’s shoulder emits a powerful burst of sound capable of starting catastrophic vibrations within any substance. His hand-held concussion rifle amplifies the effect, causing the target to literally shake itself apart.

WEAKNESSES

Soundwave’s greatest weakness is his compassion. His fondness for all life—machine or organic—can cause him to become easily distracted in battle.

His new body was made from both Cybertronian and Earth materials. Given the mixed tolerances, he occasionally suffers from his joints locking up—the hinge for his tape door in particular. This causes a number of his Recordicons to refuse to stow themselves in Soundwave’s compartment, preferring to get carried in portable cases instead.

“I have no mouth, yet I must Rock!”
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