**Rating:** Teen And Up Audiences  
**Archive Warning:** Graphic Depictions Of Violence, Major Character Death  
**Category:** F/M, Gen  
**Fandom:** Transformers - All Media Types, Transformers (Bay Movies)  
**Relationship:** Elita One/Optimus Prime, Chromia/Ironhide, Bumblebee & Sam Witwicky, Monique Epps/Robert Epps, Mikaela Banes/Sam Witwicky, Sarah Lennox/William Lennox, Ironhide & Annabelle Lennox, Shane Dyson/Tessa Yeager, Cade Yeager & Tessa Yeager, Optimus Prime & Cade Yeager, Arcee & Chromia & Elita One, Mudflap & Skids  
**Character:** Optimus Prime, Bumblebee (Transformers), Jazz (Transformers), Ironhide (Transformers), Ratchet (Transformers), Jolt (Transformers), Mirage (Transformers), Sideswipe (Transformers), Arcee Trio (Transformers), Arcee (Transformers), Chromia (Transformers), Elita One, Wheeljack (Transformers), Wreckers (Transformers), Leadfoot (Transformers), Roadbuster (Transformers), Topspin (Transformers), Steeljaw (Transformers), Skids (Transformers), Mudflap (Transformers), Wheelie (Transformers), Brains (Transformers), Jetfire (Transformers), Hound (Transformers), Drift | Deadlock, Crosshairs (Transformers), Ark (Transformers), Omega Supreme (Transformers), Prowl (Transformers), Cliffjumper (Transformers), Evac (Transformers), Warpath (Transformers), Fixit (Transformers), Rewind (Transformers), Flak (Transformers), Aerialbots (Transformers), Silverbolt (Transformers), Air Raid (Transformers), Breakaway (Transformers), Dinobots (Transformers), Grimlock (Transformers), Swoop (Transformers), Slug (Transformers), Scorn (Transformers), Slash (Transformers), Sludge (Transformers), Snarl (Transformers), Camshaft (Transformers), Knights of Cybertron, Megatron (Transformers), Galvatron (Transformers), Shockwave (Transformers), Soundwave (Transformers), Barricade (Transformers), Blackout (Transformers), Brawl (Transformers), Constructicons (Transformers), Long Haul (Transformers), Mixmaster (Transformers), Rampage (Transformers), Scrapper (Transformers), Sideways (Transformers), Laserbeak (Transformers), Mini-Cons (Transformers), Starscream (Transformers), Thunderrcacker (Transformers), Skywarp (Transformers), Dropkick (Transformers), Thrust (Transformers), Jetstorm (Transformers), Dirge (Transformers), Overcast (Transformers), Wreckage (Transformers), Stinger (Transformers), Ramjet (Transformers), Divebomb (Transformers), Flatline (Transformers), Incinerator (Transformers), Fracture (Transformers), Stockade (Transformers), Swindle (Transformers), Payload (Transformers), Dreadwing (Transformers), Astrotrain (Transformers), Grindor (Transformers), Overkill (Transformers), Sunstorm (Transformers), Lockdown (Transformers), Hangnail (Transformers), Cyber-Wolves (Transformers).
Summary

Autobots and Decepticons are now being hunted by Cemetery Wind and its insane leader, Harold Attinger. But as the Autobots try to regroup, secrets begin to arise as both races fight for survival.

Sequel to TBAM: DOTM
Hunting

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

(Near the outskirts of New Orleans, Louisiana, May 1st, 2014)

It was the dead of night around an old abandoned shipyard with warehouses sixty-feet high. The only noise were the sounds of nearby animals, along with the moving wind blowing against stone, grass, water and metal. But that began to change as a convoy of twenty-five black-painted vehicles, made up of twenty-four 2007 Cadillac Escalade ESVs and one 2007 Chevrolet Suburban 1500 LS drove into the area with two CW-407A Light Attack Helicopters flying above them for close air support. As they neared the abandoned shipyard, the vehicles began to spread out into a perimeter, blocking any known escape routes with the CW-407As hovering overhead, ready for action. From each Cadillac Escalade, four men in black BDUs, wearing full tactical gear and body armor, came out. All of them armed with either Salient Arms International Tier One AR-15 Assault Rifles or M249 Para SAWs, with some of them carrying Heckler & Koch HK69A1 Grenade Launchers.

Stepping out of the Suburban's front passenger door was a grey-haired man, wearing both black fingerless gloves and a tactical headset instead of a combat helmet, clearly the leader of this group as eight of his men walked up to him.

"Take Golf Squad to cover the left flank while Bravo Squad covers the right. All remaining squads will move down the center," ordered Cemetery Wind Field Commander James Savoy to his subordinates, who quickly nodded as they headed back to their respective squads before leading them to their assigned positions as their CO contacted the helicopters above them.

"Cobra to Viper-One, do you have any visuals, over?" said Savoy into the boom mike of his headset.

Hovering above, the copilot of Viper-One replied: "Negative, Cobra. We don't-wait..." he paused when he noticed something new appeared on his screen. "Got a faint Energon sig in one of the warehouses up ahead."

The former Green Beret quickly relayed the info to his eight squad leaders who began leading their men towards the suspected warehouse, taking care to watch the alleyways and side streets incase of a possible ambush. Suddenly, the suspected warehouse ahead of them exploded, causing the Cemetery Wind Operatives to take cover from flying debris.

From out of the smoke, Jetfire came running out. Without wasting a second, the ninety-six CW Operatives began firing at the fleeing 50-foot black-colored Seeker, pelting his back and wings with both 5.56x45mm NATO Armor-Piercing/Tracer bullets and 40x46mmSR High-Explosive-Dual-Purpose (HEDP) grenade rounds.

Seeing their target trying to escape through his binoculars, Savoy quickly barked orders into his tactical headset.

"Cobra to all squads, target's making a run for it. Return to your vehicles immediately. Vipers, keep your sights on the target and pursue. Remember: this one's a flyer, so target his wings and engines to keep him grounded!"

Once finished, Savoy ran back to his Suburban, followed by his men as the two CW-407As began to pursue Jetfire.
"Damn humans..." muttered the former Decepticon in his thick Australian-accent as he kept running while still under fire. Jetfire was about to transform into his alt-mode when the two CW-407As caught up and began firing Hydra-70 Air-to-Surface Rockets at him, badly damaging the two JT11D-20 jet-engines that made up his thighs and causing Jetfire to tumble forward. By then, the CW Operatives got to the old Seeker's location in their vehicles and opened up on him when they got closer. The two CW-407As withdrew after firing all of their Hydra-70s.

Jetfire fought back by firing his right forearm-mounted Particle Beam Cannon, but was starting to falter under the humans' relentless assault. By the time Savoy gave the order to cease firing, the elderly Seeker had his entire lower left leg and his right forearm blown off, along with sparks and green Energon leaking from different parts of his chassis.

Letting out a pained gasp, Jetfire pulled out his Double-Bladed Energon Axe to support himself as he stood on his knees. "Blasted humans, no honor in them whatsoever," cursed the bearded mech.

Deeming that Jetfire could no longer fight back, Savoy casually walked closer towards the Seeker with his men ready to deliver the killing blow if he gave the signal. "Not bad, Decepticon," he mockingly commented.

This caused Jetfire to narrow his red optics at him. "I'm an Autobot, you stupid meatbag!"

The former U.S Army Master Sergeant only snorted. "If so, why are you running?"

"You think I'm an idiot?!" snapped Jetfire. "Lord Prime told us we're being hunted-by you humans!"

He then played a recorded message from Optimus.

"This is Optimus Prime to all Autobots! Cease all contact with humans! I repeat, cease all contact with humans! Cemetery Wind is hunting us! Lay low, stay hidden and stay together! Do not let the humans of Cemetery Wind find you!"

Once he was done playing the message, Jetfire continued: "You attacked us! Killed so many of us at Autobot City! Well, if you want to take me down, then you'll be joining me!"

And with that, the old Seeker raised his axe over his helm as he prepared to bring it down on the human. Startled by Jetfire's bold move, Savoy started to back up as his men prepared to fire. When suddenly, a high-velocity projectile struck the old Seeker in the lower chassis and severing his bipedalism cord, causing Jetfire to drop his weapon as he fell flat on his back with a grunt.

From the nearby water rose a 22-foot dark-grey mech. The entire front of his helm was covered by some kind of sniper rifle that subspaced itself away to reveal the mech's surprisingly humanoid faceplates and green optics. Savoy and the CW Operatives backed away as the unknown mech began walking up towards Jetfire, who managed to turn his helm before narrowing his optics as he recognized his shooter. "You-I know you. The Bounty Hunter, Lockdown."

"I'm honored that I'm known by an ancient Seeker such as you, Jetfire," replied said mech with a British-accent as he stood above him. "However, you're just like the rest of them. Autobots and Decepticons, like little Sparklings, always fighting, making a mess out of the universe that I've got to clean up afterwards."

As he spoke, Lockdown's right arm shifted into a menacing hook. "If you value your life, old timer, then you will tell me what I want to know," continued the Bounty Hunter as he leaned forward and put his left pede on Jetfire's chassis, pinning him to the ground. "Tell me where Optimus Prime is."

Jetfire glared at Lockdown for a moment as if he would sell out Optimus or his fellow Autobots.
Five seconds later, he gave the Bounty Hunter his answer: "Never."

And with that, Lockdown plunged his hook right through Jetfire's chestplates, causing the Seeker to arch his back in pain before the Bounty Hunter ripped out Jetfire's spark violently. The Seeker's optics flickered for a few seconds as he fell back lifelessly to the ground.

"Never is already here," replied Lockdown as he walked away, crushing Jetfire's spark as his right arm shifted back to normal.

"He's all yours," he said to Savoy as he transformed into a sleek 2013 Lamborghini Aventador LP700-4 Coupe before speeding off. Savoy smirked sinisterly as he contacted his superior about another confirmed Transformer kill as one of his men began treating two fellow operatives for minor burns.

None of them, however, noticed the pink 2008 Ducati 848 Motorcycle on a nearby hill. After a few seconds, the holoform of a female motorcyclist with a helmet on, appeared in the seat as its engine and headlights turned on before driving away from the scene at full speed.

(Abandoned airport, two hours later...)

As he worked on a communicator device that wouldn't attract the attention of nearby humans, the 15-foot Autobot Scientist/Inventor, Wheeljack, could still overhear the argument between Ironhide and Jazz with Ratchet standing nearby. The other occupants: Mirage, Sideswipe and Jolt were watching the perimeter. Even they were listening to the argument a little.

"Calm down, 'Hide. Going gung-ho isn't going to help our situation," ordered Jazz as the 22-foot black mech only growled in aggravation.

"I almost can't take any of this slag anymore!" bellowed Ironhide, causing the ground to rumble a little. "We've been on the run for three years and have not once done any drastic counter. How much longer are we going to have to keep running with our afts in the air?!"

Jazz only glared at the Heavy Weapons Specialist, not the least bit intimidated. "You remember Optimus' orders: avoid human contact at all costs. Right now, humanity thinks that all of us are the enemy. Attacking them would just increase their fears," retorted the 15-foot silver mech. "Our best chance to survive is to keep moving from state to state, searching for any Autobot survivors and Optimus."

The Saboteur's words made Wheeljack think back to the past three years. Ever since the Battle of Chicago, humanity had begun to fear and hate Cybertronians (or Transformers as the public like to call them), both Autobots and Decepticons alike. Many had assumed (incorrectly) that Optimus Prime had let the 'Chicago Massacre' happen to point out to Earth's governments that they cannot negotiate with Decepticons any more than they can with terrorists. With pressure building up from most of the American public and Congress, both the U.S President and the British Prime Minister had no choice but to decommissioned NEST and dissolve their treaty with the Autobots six months after the Battle of Chicago. Despite that, the President still granted the Autobots asylum in the United States. Prior to that, five months earlier, as more Autobots began to land on Earth, the U.S Government gave Optimus and his group permission to build a base in the Grand Canyon, affectionately calling it 'Autobot City', in order to mine the Energon deposit discovered there. Also, Wheeljack was able to build a GroundBridge that can transport Autobots to different coordinates on Earth. For a while, things began to settle down.

But that changed when the Central Intelligence Agency created a new paramilitary black ops unit called 'Cemetery Wind'. Officially, Cemetery Wind was supposed to hunt down Decepticons, but
suddenly started to secretly target the Autobots too. Their first act was launching a unprovoked full-scale assault on Autobot City, half a year after Chicago. Unprepared and taken by surprise, the Autobots stood little to no chance against the armed humans' assault, with Optimus' trailer destroyed and some of the newly-arrived Autobots being killed right away. With no means to directly contact the U.S Government or CIA Director Mike Hunley, Optimus ordered the remaining Autobots to scatter and go into hiding. Many of the Autobots managed to make it through the GroundBridge before it was destroyed. Omega Supreme, aka the Ark, took off with the Wreckers, the twins, Elita, Chromia and the twenty-one Hatchlings found in Namibia, onboard. Wheeljack personally destroyed any of his prototypes and tech he couldn't bring with. Better they be destroyed then used against them.

And so, for the past three years, the Autobots had been on the run from Cemetery Wind as they hunted down both them and Decepticons, regardless of faction. Some Autobots had tried surviving on their own, while a few had managed to form small groups and hold out, hence the current situation. Jazz and his group had been moving from county to county, hiding in abandoned airports, shipyards and other facilities, all the while searching for any other Autobot survivors and Optimus.

Wheeljack was brought out of his thoughts when he heard Ironhide growling as he tried to restrain himself from attacking Jazz. It was then that Ratchet, the Autobot Chief Medical Officer, came in and broke up the fighting. "That's enough, you two. Fighting amongst ourselves won't do any good in solving our situation. Let's wait for Arcee to return from her scouting trip," said the 20-foot lime-green and white mech, causing Ironhide and Jazz to back off from one another.

Ironhide's anger was understandable since he wasn't known for running away from a fight. The fact that the humans have turned on them after the Autobots had sacrificed everything, even their own homeworld to save Earth, just ticked him off. Plus the black mech's current behavior was also because they're had been no contact with the Ark since the attack on Autobot City, including his sparkmate, Chromia, who took off aboard said ship.

It was at this moment, the same pink motorcycle came driving towards the three mechs. As she neared them, Arcee deactivated her holoform before transforming into her 16-foot biped form before coming to a halt in front of them. Sideswipe, Mirage, Jolt and Wheeljack joined the four as they listened to what Arcee had found. Sadly, she had no good news as the pink femme shook her helm as she gave them her report.

To hear of Jetfire's offline didn't do any good for the Autobots' morale. Ever since he was revived after the Fallen's death in the Battle of Giza, the old Seeker had worked hard to atone for the crimes he committed during his time with the Decepticons. Most notably, Jetfire had fought valiantly during the Battle of Chicago, taking on Shockwave and facing against many Decepticon-manned Orbital Assault Fighters and bringing them down with great determination. To hear of his brutal murder at the servos and hands of both Lockdown and Cemetery Wind was greatly disheartening for the group as they hadn't found any other Autobot survivors this month.

"That makes the fifth one this year," lamented Ratchet, with Mirage, the Autobot Spymaster/Sniper nodding his helm in agreement.

"It seems those bastardos are becoming more adept in locating us," commented the 15-foot rosso corsa mech in his thick Italian-accent as he crossed his arms over his chassis. "We best be ready to move soon."

At that moment, Wheeljack's communicator device sprang to life, startling all eight Autobots as static filled the air as distorted voices were heard. The 15-foot white mech with red and green racing stripes ran up to the device, trying to strengthen the signal, as the others joined Wheeljack at the table.
"Is it an Autobot?" asked Sideswipe as the 15-foot silver Frontliner leaned in closer.

"Has to be, this device I built was designed to lock only onto Autobot comm frequencies," replied Wheeljack. "Now give me a second as I try to get a fix on the signal."

After a few seconds, the signal began to clear up as a voice was heard.

"Hound, here...attack...Cemetery Wind...need assistance...Bumblebee...Drift...Crosshairs..."

"Hound? I haven't heard from him since Autobot City," said Ironhide with surprise and relief at hearing the Commando's voice.

"And did he say 'Bumblebee'?" asked Arcee, hoping that her lifelong crush was alright.

"Hound also said that Drift and Crosshairs are with him too," added Jolt, the 16-foot blue mech who was the Junior Medical Officer.

Jazz looked at Wheeljack. "Can you pinpoint their location?"

The Scientist/Inventor typed a few commands into the device before looking at the screen. "It's not solid, but they're two miles west of here. Looks like an abandoned factory."

"Okay. Arcee, help 'Jack pack up. Something tells me we'll be looking for a new hideout. The rest of you, we've got four fellow Autobots to save!" ordered Jazz as he and the others transformed into their respective alt-modes and headed out, hoping that they weren't too late.

(With Bumblebee's group...)

"Move your afts in gear, 'Bots!" shouted Crosshairs in his Australian-accent as the 17-foot neon-green and black 'trenchcoated' Paratrooper fired several shots with his dual Ion Machine Pistols at their pursuers.

Beside him was Drift, the 15-foot black and light sky-blue Samurai/Triple-Changer, dual wielding his Cybertanium Katanas as he used them to deflect incoming rockets. "I'm detecting twelve enemy helicopters heading towards us," reported the former Decepticon turned Autobot Master Swordsman in his Japanese-accent as he deflected another rocket.

"Let's move deeper into the factory! They won't risk chasing us in close-spaces!" shouted Bumblebee through his radio as he dodged some rockets.

"Hound, get your fat aft over here!" shouted Crosshairs to the 24-foot portly Commando who was running towards them.

"Shut yer trap, Crosshairs!" yelled Hound as a rocket grazed the Woodland- Pattern bearded mech's back. "I ain't that slow!"

The group of four made it inside one of the buildings, not bothering to turn on their lights as it would immediately give away their location to their pursuers. They stayed quiet as their audio receptors picked up the sounds of CW-407As flying overhead, searching for them with their wide-beam Energon Detectors mounted in ball-turrets. Peeking out through a nearby window, Hound could see that the Cemetery Wind Operatives had brought in some 2007 Cadillac Escalade ESVs with roof-mounted M134G Miniguns. He could also tell that the humans on the ground were very hesitant on moving forward, since going into tight spaces would give the Autobots a tactical advantage.

"Let's try to find another exit, then we can quietly slip past them," suggested Drift, getting nods of
agreement from the others. As they were about to move, a male voice speaking from a megaphone made them paused.

"I know you're in there...Bumblebee, is it?" asked the person on the megaphone. "This is Staff Sergeant Brandon J. Khendsovan. You probably don't remember me, but I was a former member of NEST before leaving."

The name made Hound frown. "I know him. That traitor defected when we caught him selling info on us to Cemetery Wind in exchange for money," muttered the Commando in disgust.

"Why don't you and your three fellow Autobots surrender, Bumblebee. You're both outnumbered and outgunned," continued Brandon. "After all, you don't want anything to happen to the remainder of your late friend's family, right?"

'Bee froze as memories came back to him, taking him back three years ago to the day when his two best human friends were brutally murdered in cold blood. He was with Sam and Mikaela, parked inside the garage of Mikaela's owned car repair shop in Nevada the day after Cemetery Wind launched their unsanctioned attack on Autobot City. Daniel, Sam and Mikaela's infant son, was being cared for by Sam's parents when a detachment of CW vehicles and operatives appeared before surrounding the shop. From inside the garage and in his alt-mode, the yellow mech with black racing stripes could hear the men demanding the whereabouts of any nearby Autobots from the young couple, while stating that all Cybertronians were illegal and they were a menace to humanity.

Bumblebee had only realized too late how ruthless these people were when he heard a huge scuffle outside before hearing a sidearm being racked that was soon quickly followed by the sounds of two gunshots. Bursting out of the garage, the young Autobot quickly shifted into his 16-foot biped form, smashing aside vehicles and startled CW Operatives until he stared at the bodies of both his human charge and his wife in horror. Sam and Mikaela had both of their hands tied behind their backs, blindfolded and gagged before they were each shot execution-style with a single 9x19mm Parabellum FMJ (Full-Metal-Jacket) round to the forehead. Even though he wanted nothing more than to kill all of the Cemetery Wind Operatives around him, Bumblebee knew that he was outgunned and that fighting them would endanger nearby innocent bystanders. And so with a heavy spark, the young Scout was forced to flee, but not before calling the nearby hospital so that Sam and Mikaela could be given proper burials. Bumblebee spent the next few weeks after that to make sure that both Daniel and Sam's parents were safe before heading out to find any other Autobot survivors.

Now hearing this bastard threatening Sam's remaining family caused the anger in 'Bee's spark to rise. The fact that they were planning to murder an innocent child like Daniel Witwicky, who was just two-years-old, only caused the Scout's anger to grow into tranquil fury.

This was something that the other Autobots had noticed. "Don't listen to the athole, 'Bee. He's just trying bait you," hissed Crosshairs.

Unfortunately, Brandon's next words were: "We will kill them, as they are all charged with high treason for siding with alien threats. Although, my superior might want us to bring in the kid, Daniel, right? After all, we always need new recruits."

That had been the last straw. Sliding down his battlemask, Bumblebee broke through the factory wall as he morphed his right arm into his signature Solar Plasma Cannon before deploying his dual shoulder-mounted Six-Tubed Micro-Rocket/Missile Launchers. With a battle cry, 'Bee fired two Micro-Short-Range-Surface-to-Air-Missiles (MSRSAM) at the two closest CW-407As and bringing both of them down in flames. The remaining ten helicopters flew in towards the mech, followed by the CW-manned vehicles, but Bumblebee didn't let up as he kept on firing.

"Aw, slag," cursed Crosshairs as he cocked his dual Ion Machine Pistols before running out to join
'Bee.

"Threatening an innocent human child is totally unacceptable," commented Drift as he joined his comrades. Behind him, Hound came charging out with his X19 Scrapmaker Minigun at the ready.

"Eat this, ya bitches!" yelled Hound as he fired his triple-rotary-barrel weapon at three Cadillac Escalades, shredding all three vehicles and killing their occupants instantly.

One of the CW-407As tried to take a shot at the Commando, but was brought down when Drift threw one of his Cybertanium Katanas into the air and cutting the helicopter's tail in half.

Seeing this, the nine remaining helicopters flew higher and remained at a safe distance before continuing to launch Hydra-70s on the four Autobots. Meanwhile, the CW vehicles had begun to do zig-zags around the Autobots, trying to avoid being hit while firing back at the same time. Although the various smokestacks and buildings limited their maneuverability, they also made cover for them too. In a few minutes, all four Autobots were soon pinned down as the operatives moved in for the kill. But that changed when an explosion suddenly occurred, hitting one of the Cadillac Escalade ESVs from behind and sent it tumbling into the air before hitting the ground violently.

"Autobots, attack!" yelled Jazz as he transformed into biped form before firing his Crescent Shield Cannon. He was soon joined by Ironhide, followed by the others. Mirage quickly deployed his left wrist-mounted Ion Sniper Rifle as he targeted the CW Operatives manning the roof-mounted M134G Miniguns on the Cadillac Escalades, with each of his shots bisecting the gunners literally in half. Sideswipe skated around on his wheeled-pedes and slicing the Cadillac Escalades in half with his dual wrist-mounted Cybertanium Swords after Mirage took out each gunner. Meanwhile, Ratchet was dealing with the remaining CW-407As with his Energon SMG, while Ironhide fired his dual forearm-mounted Ion Pulse Cannons as Jazz and Jolt made their way over to the other four Autobots.

"Ha-ha! Reinforcements are here!" cheered Hound as he and Jolt helped Drift up, whose left leg had been damaged by shrapnel.

Jazz stood beside Crosshairs, firing alongside the Paratrooper. "We got your transmission! We're just glad we managed to make it here in time!" shouted the SpecOps mech.

"Damn good timing too!" replied Crosshairs.

Bumblebee ignored all this as he scanned the battlefield for the vehicle that Brandon was in. Eventually, he spotted it: the sole remaining 2007 Cadillac Escalade ESV with a roof-mounted M134G Minigun as it drove away from the battle. With a growl, the young Scout quickly transformed into his alt-mode of a 2011 Chevrolet Camaro 2SS Coupe as he gave chase.

"Bee, where are ya going?!" roared Ironhide as said 'Bot drove off. The Heavy Weapons Specialist quickly shifted into his alt-mode of a lifted 2006 GMC TopKick C4500 Ultimate Class IV Crew Cab Pickup Truck with twin smokestacks and a Road Armor front bumper accessory as he drove after Bumblebee.

"Bugger lost his slagging processor!" cursed Crosshairs as he finished off the last CW-407A.

Back with Bumblebee, said mech had finally caught up with Brandon's vehicle, all the while avoiding the 7.62x51mm NATO Armor-Piercing-Incendiary/Tracer rounds being fired at him from the Cadillac Escalade's roof-mounted M134G Minigun. Activating his Stealth Force mode, Bumblebee opened up on the black-painted vehicle. Eventually, the Cadillac Escalade made a hard right turn due to the heavy-fire it was taking. That gave 'Bee a chance to transform into his biped form before delivering a powerful kick with his left pede at the vehicle. The blow sent it flying...
before crashing hard into the ground, skidding a few seconds before coming to a stop. The impact had also damaged the engine, causing flames and fuel to leak out.

Bumblebee slowly made his way towards the wreckage, keeping his optics open for any movements. That's when the back-hatch window was broken, causing glass to fly everywhere as a left black-gloved fist stuck out. Slowly, it was followed by a man wearing a bloody and torn Cemetery Wind Battle Dress Uniform (BDU) and tactical gear trying to crawl out of the wrecked vehicle. He was clearly in pain if the coughs and grunts were any indication. Although he was wearing both a helmet and kerchief that covered his lower face, the noise he was making was enough for Bumblebee to identify him as former Green Beret and U.S Army Staff Sergeant Brandon J. Khendsovan.

Morphing his right arm into his Solar Plasma Cannon, Bumblebee slowly raised it towards the crawling man. With a cold glare in his optics, the Scout fired. The last thing Brandon saw was a yellow-orange plasma bolt flying out of 'Bee's weapon that flew straight towards him as it struck the wrecked vehicle, taking the rogue NEST Soldier with it as it exploded in flames.

As the smoke from the flames reached the sky, Bumblebee stared on apathetically. He didn't even notice Ironhide who had just caught up with him before changing into his biped form. Placing his left servo on the yellow mech's right shoulder, Ironhide asked: "What the frag was that all about, 'Bee?"

The Heavy Weapons Specialist got no response from Bumblebee, saved for the young mech to brush his servo off. Without a word, 'Bee transformed into his alt-mode and drove off to regroup with the others. Ironhide kept his optics on the Scout, a look in them said that the black mech had a feeling of what had caused 'Bee to become so ruthless a few seconds ago. He then turned his attention to the still-burning wreckage, noticing the scorched corpse sticking out of the back-hatch window. Eventually, Ironhide shifted into his alt-mode and went back to regroup with the others.

Chapter End Notes

I do like Jetfire, don't get me wrong, but in my opinion, I think he was the BETTER choice to kill off instead of Ratchet in the actual film.

Khendsovan is a character from the Transformers Bayverse toyline who goes under the codename: 'Sergeant Chaos'. In his toy bio when he first joined NEST, Brandon didn't fit in due to not seeing any significant distinction between the Autobots and Decepticons.

Salient Arms International is a real-life firearms company, who had three of their different products shown in the film.

I know that some of you are mad about Sam and Mikaela's fate, but I couldn't really think of what else to do with them.
(Alaska, one month later...)

Lockdown watched from the top of his ship, hidden behind the snowy tops of the Brooks Mountain Range as the heavy-lift cargo helicopter, an unmarked CH-53E Super Stallion that carried his human 'business partner' was making its way towards him. The Bounty Hunter noted that there were no other aircraft escorting the chopper. This meant that the human was either foolish enough to come here without backup, or he had other teams hiding somewhere. It didn't mean anything to Lockdown since said mech was already in a sour mood.

Behind the Bounty Hunter were several of his Cybertronian Mercenaries and his 20-foot SiC, Hangnail. It was true that it would look overkill against a single human helicopter, but Lockdown felt that it would be necessary to give a show of force. To show them that he was not a mech to be fooled around with.

Hangnail made a disgruntled noise as his green optics watched the chopper land. "Damn human, always coming here as if he was the boss of us," he complained.

"Such is the typical behavior amongst his species," commented Lockdown as Harold Attinger, CIA agent and the founder and Director of Cemetery Wind, walked out of the Super Stallion in winter-clothing as soon as the loading ramp was lowered.

"Nevertheless, his organization has proven useful towards our goal...for now," finished Lockdown as he walked towards the 50-year-old almost bald human with a grey beard.

"I thought you tracked Prime to New Mexico," the Bounty Hunter said to Attinger, not even bothering with the pleasantries.

"We did, but he escaped us," replied the CIA agent. "Our forces were spread thin when we were taking down that Decepticon cell in Hawaii."

"Don't give me excuses, human. Me and Hangnail were there when your men assaulted Starscream's base," retorted Lockdown. "If it weren't for me and my SiC, all of your men would've been slaughtered. Were you at least able to locate Optimus' current position?"

"No, he's covering his tracks well. We believe he's somewhere in one of the neighboring states, possibly Texas," answered Attinger.

Lockdown let out a disgusted snort. "So much for human intelligence. Your kind are too much like Sparklings, always needing supervision," he said out loud before leveling a glare at the CW Director. "Know this Mr. Harold Attinger of Earth: Contracts, like humans, can...expire. Whether by accident or on purpose," finished the Bounty Hunter as he gave a glance towards the helicopter the CIA agent arrived in.

If Attinger felt insulted by that, he didn't show it. Lockdown had to give him credit on that, the human knew how to hide his emotions well. It was one of the reasons why the Bounty Hunter agreed to this deal. That, and it made it easier for him to operate without getting shot at by Cemetery Wind.
"I'm fully aware of the contract's stipulation," said Attinger evenly, causing Lockdown to grin sinisterly.

"Well, at least you're not that slow," replied the Bounty Hunter mockingly. "And as we agreed, one Prime for one Seed. Nothing more, nothing less. Provided that your organization can actually find him."

"We're working on it," replied the CIA agent through gritted teeth.

Lockdown rolled his green optics as he walked away. "I don't feel assured..." he commented as he headed back with Hangnail and his mercenary army in tow. The Bounty Hunter didn't even watch if Harold left in the helicopter.

Once inside the ship, one of Lockdown's Mercenaries walked up to him. "Sir, our other guest is waiting for you."

"Good, at least his timing hasn't change," mused Lockdown as he headed down a hallway with Hangnail walking beside him. A few minutes later, the duo were in a large circular room. Inside the room were more Cybertronian Mercenaries with their weapons out, but it was the trio of mechs in the center that the Bounty Hunter focused on. The first one was a 31-foot blue and silver-colored Seeker whose entire frame looked exactly like Starscream's. The second and largest of them was a 60-foot purple and grey mech with blunt digits and a secondary set of optics as well. The last one was a familiar 35-foot grey-purplish one-optic mech with a right arm-mounted AstroMag Cannon with its powerpack mounted on his back and a left forearm-mounted Cybertanium Blade. Despite their intimidating appearances, Lockdown casually walked up to them. The Seeker was Thundercracker, who had taken the alt-mode of an F-22A Raptor. The larger mech's name was Astrotrain, one of the few and rare Triple-Changers still alive, who had taken the alt-modes of both a 800 Series Shinkansen Train and a NASA Space Shuttle.

The Bounty Hunter approached the third 'Con in the group. "I suppose you are here to see the captives, Shockwave?"

"You are correct, Lockdown. I hope you don't mind the others' presence. They're merely here to keep your men in check," replied the Decepticon Scientist/Assassin in his usual cold and emotionless voice.

The Bounty Hunter knew that the other two Decepticons were there to watch Shockwave's back, something that Lockdown doubt was necessary. Shockwave hadn't earned his infamy just because of his ruthless logic, but also because of his raw strength that rivalled Megatron's. Lockdown was pretty sure that the one-optic 'Con could offline the majority of his troops on his own. Despite that, Shockwave was the only Decepticon who the Bounty Hunter had any respect for. They both shared a cold, emotionless outlook on life, not allowing petty things such as emotions to control them. And combined with his logical thinking, Shockwave made the perfect client, sometimes business partner, for him. But Lockdown didn't say it out loud.

"As per our agreement, any Decepticons that you and your men have managed to capture will be given to serve the Decepticon cause or be terminated," said Shockwave. "I assume that the humans of Cemetery Wind have yet to locate Prime."

"Yes, and their incompetence is starting to annoy me," commented the Bounty Hunter with a growl. "I still cannot fathom why should I be working with them."

In the past, when Lockdown first defected from the Decepticons, it was Shockwave who personally assisted the mech and his followers in acquiring the Knight's Ship that the Bounty Hunter now used
as his vessel. The one-optic mech knew that there would come a time when he would need Lockdown's skills and the Bounty Hunter would have to repay the debt he owed him. That time came after the Battle of Chicago when Megatron went into emergency stasis lock due to the near-fatal injuries he received from Optimus Prime. After the battle, the surviving Decepticons had split into two groups; one led by the ambitious Starscream, and the other led by Shockwave, though publicly led by Blackout, while some set out on their own. When Cemetery Wind began to secretly hunt down and eliminate all Cybertronians, Shockwave knew that this could be an advantage not only for himself, but to the Decepticons loyal to the cause and the resurrection of Megatron.

Then Lockdown came, having taken up a contract from the mysterious Creators to retrieve Optimus Prime, alive. Shockwave saw this as an opportunity to complete two objectives: the revival of Megatron and the elimination of the Autobots. Contacting the Bounty Hunter upon his arrival to Earth, Shockwave had the mech honor the debt that he still owed him. The deal was that the Scientist/Assassin will assist Lockdown and the Creators in locating and capturing Optimus. In return, the Bounty Hunter will eliminate any Decepticons that wouldn't submit, and give Shockwave a Seed to help the 'Cons rebuild their forces on Earth. In order for the plan to work, the Decepticon FiC suggested to Lockdown to work with Cemetery Wind, under the guise of giving them the Seed. Although the Bounty Hunter disdained the idea, there were some benefits with working with the rogue CIA black ops unit. That way, Lockdown can have more freedom hunting down Optimus, while also eliminating any Autobots or rogue Decepticons found by Cemetery Wind.

"It's true that the humans aren't the most efficient species, but they are useful as they will take the brunt of any possible counterattack, while my forces prepare for Lord Megatron's return," commented Shockwave as he and Lockdown reached the ship's brig. The Bounty Hunter pressed a few buttons on a nearby console, and soon several cells opened. Inside them were Starscream, Barricade, Sideways, Long Haul, Mixmaster, Rampage, Scraper, and eight Protoforms; the survivors of Cemetery Wind's assault on the Decepticon base in Hawaii. They all looked up as Lockdown and Shockwave entered the brig, many of them surprised to see the one-optic mech with the Bounty Hunter.

"I'll leave you to your own," Lockdown said to Shockwave as he walked out. "I still have work to do."

(Somewhere in Texas...)

An old blue 1990 Jeep Wrangler YJ Two-Door SUV sat idly in a old parking lot. Lying down in the back, was a young twelve-year-old boy slowly getting up as the rising sun peeked through the windows. As if it was following the kid's example, the Jeep Wrangler made a rumbling noise as if it was waking up too.

"Morning, Adam," said a male voice from the Jeep Wrangler's radio.

Said kid yawned as he stretched his arms out. He was slightly taller than the average height as one of his age would be at. His skin was slightly-tanned and showing that he had been out in the sun good enough. His short, brown hair was currently a mess with strands sticking out due to his tossing and turning in his sleep. They appear to contrast with his light-blue eyes that had a currently tired look in them. Presently, he was wearing an orange short-sleeve shirt with a cog on the front, and revealed his prosthetic left arm. Finally, he wore plain, white shorts and was currently barefoot. Beside him was a pillow, a thin blanket and a small fan that was still spinning, letting cool air fill the vehicle's interior.

"Morning, Evac," replied Adam, getting a honk from the Jeep Wrangler in return.

It had been three years since Adam had been traveling with the Autobot and Junior Knight of Cybertron, Evac. A survivor of the Battle of Chicago, Adam's mother was killed by the Decepticons
on the night they invaded the city, effectively making Adam an orphan. Not wanting to be stuck in foster care, the young kid struck out on his own by using the money in his mom's bank account and whatever he could scavenge from the war-torn city. He'd been traveling the state for five months, taking on small jobs that had use for his skills with computers and machines, while staying in motels or abandoned buildings. For protection, Adam carried a M26C Taser Stun Gun that he found in a destroyed police station in Chicago. Half a year later, he met Evac, one of the Autobots that had survived Cemetery Wind's unsanctioned assault on Autobot City.

Despite his mom's brutal death, Adam was not stupid enough to confuse Autobots with Decepticons, with the former having saved humanity from a lifetime of slavery from their evil counterparts. Although their relationship started out a bit shaky at first, but the two of them soon became close friends and with the Autobot's aid, the duo began traveling the country together, avoiding Cemetery Wind while trying to find any Autobot survivors. Whenever Evac was low on energy, Adam would go and buy fuel for the Autobot while under the guise as an assistant for Evac's holoform driver.

As he got up, Adam felt something small tapped his left leg. Looking down, the young boy saw a small metallic-brown Cybertronian, no bigger than his hand. Smiling, Adam said: "Morning, Rewind."

Also, it wasn't just Adam and Evac. Even before his travels, Adam had been best friends with Rewind, an AllSpark Mutant. Formerly, he was nothing more than a brownish-red Parrot AR 2.0 Elite Edition Quadcopter Drone that had been given life by the AllSpark during the Battle of Mission City, and somehow took up residence with Adam and his mom when he was just seven. Unlike the other electronic devices and vehicles given life by the Cube, Rewind wasn't as violent as the others, having slowly regained sentience during the first month when he was given life. Since then, he had proven to be helpful and very friendly. Rewind's true biped form was 3'5-feet tall, but he could make himself smaller by separating himself into smaller components, each with a part of Rewind's conscious. Normally he would remain inside Adam's backpack, coming out now and then or when Adam needed his help.

"Morning, boss," replied Rewind as he waved at Adam. Meanwhile, the other parts of him came out of the backpack, which served as their 'bed' and stretching out their small frames as they prepared for the new day.

Getting ready for today, Adam brushed his teeth, packed his stuff, put his shoes and socks on, ate an energy bar before jumping out of Evac's left passenger door. He waited as Rewind's components got comfortable inside his backpack, except for one that latched onto Adam's left wrist before transforming into a digital watch of unknown make. Then Evac transformed into his 16-foot biped form as the blue mech stretched out his arms and adjusted his blue optics to the sunlight.

"What's the plan today, Adam?" asked Evac.

"Well, I figure that we go by that Energon signature you picked up yesterday," replied the young boy as he scanned the area. They were near the outskirts of a small town, and thus were few humans to see the Cybertronian. "You're sure it was an Autobot?"

"Yeah, but I lost the signature briefly in New Mexico before it came back, and then lost it again. My guess is that he or she had gone into stasis lock," explained Evac as he changed back into his alt-mode.

"Well, let's hope it's just stasis lock. Otherwise this is going to be a waste of time," said Adam as he sat in the passenger seat as Evac's holoform appeared in the driver's seat. The Jeep Wrangler took off, heading down the highway.
After an hour, Adam fell fast asleep as Rewind's components crawled out of the kid's backpack, curiously scanning the landscape. Another hour later, they finally neared the outskirts of the small Texan town of Paris, where were many buildings had been abandoned, when Evac did a sudden stop that caused Adam to jerk forward and wake up from his nap.

"Evac, what the hell?!" demanded Adam. Rewind was also recovering, as he had hit the front windshield faceplate first.

"The Energon signature has started to move!" hissed Evac, while Rewind jumped back into Adam's backpack.

The young kid blinked at that piece of news. "Did the Autobot wake up?" he asked, though judging from the expression on Evac's face on his holoform, the answer would be different.

"No, judging from the rate of movement, the Autobot is still in stasis lock. That means they're being moved by someone else," explained Evac.

"You think it's Cemetery Wind?" asked Adam, subconsciously gripping his M26C.

"Can't be. Past records show that those scumbags kill *any* Cybertronians they find. It wouldn't make any sense for them to change their style now," added the Junior Knight. His holoform's eyes widened when Adam hooped out.

"Wait, Adam! Where are you going?" asked the Autobot as he transformed into his true form.

"To check it out. It be easier if I go alone, so that in the event it is Cemetery Wind, they will be less likely to kill me," explained the young boy. "Besides, I'll have Rewind with me. You can remain at the edge of the town incase I need you."

Evac was still uncomfortable, but nevertheless agreed with Adam's idea. The Autobot transformed back into his alt-mode and hid himself in the shadow of a nearby old house. Meanwhile, Adam walked deeper into the town, using Rewind's binocular mode to locate the Energon source. After a few minutes of walking, the young kid came upon an old movie theater. Using the binoculars could see two older human males that have brought a 2006 Kenworth T300 Rollback Tow Truck with them, perhaps to tow some vehicle or other junk they could scavenge. True enough, the two humans began pulling out what looked like a dilapidated 1973 Marmon HDT-AC 86 Cabover Truck that was completely covered in dirt and rust from the theater.

"I'm detecting a faint Energon signature from that Marmon, boss. That has to be an Autobot!" said Rewind.

However, Adam hadn't heard him. The moment the Marmon came into view, the young kid began to feel an incredible pain from his chest as his heart started to beat rapidly, as if a switch had been flipped. A wave of nausea and blurry visions filled his sight. It became difficult for Adam to breathe and had to lean on a nearby wall for support. Seeing his unusual behavior, Rewind's components transformed and combined together as the Mini-Con stood beside his human friend. "Adam, what's wrong? Adam?!" cried Rewind as the young teen collapsed on the ground.

Adam still couldn't hear him as his vision was going dark. All he could see right now were small dots of light before he lost consciousness. The last thing he saw was someone approaching him before everything went black.

Chapter End Notes
For Evac, I'm using both his design and bio from the Transformers Ride at Universal Studios Theme Park in Orlando, FL.
Old and New Faces

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

(Decepticon Base, Mount Yamantau, Ural Mountains, Russian Federation)

Buried deep within Mount Yamantau, was an old Soviet base that was hidden away for years. The CIA had always believed that the Soviets kept a base there, but could never find proof of its actual existence. That didn't mean there wasn't one, and it had been built with the sole purpose of studying the Decepticon, Shockwave.

(Flashback...)

The Scientist/Assassin and his pet had left Cybertron in an impossibly fast ship, departing to find Megatron who had gone searching for the AllSpark when it was launched into space by the Autobots during the Battle of Tyger Pax. Tracing his leader's faint distress signal to Earth, Shockwave came streaking down towards the planet at an uncontrollable velocity before he and his pet wound up crash-landing at Tunguska, Siberia in 1908, unknowingly creating the Tunguska Event in the process. Knocked into emergency stasis lock after being ejected from the cockpit, Shockwave remained buried under the snow, completely undisturbed until the Red Army discovered him in 1919. Carefully guarded by Siberian troops, the one-optic mech was secretly moved in 1951 to the Soviet Union's new underground base in Mount Yamantau that was built to study him. From there, Soviet scientists were able to successfully reverse-engineer Shockwave's technology, which helped them to develop and create the world's first nuclear power plant at Obninsk in 1954. During the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War, all physical records pertaining to Shockwave (since no photographs were taken of him) and the Mount Yamantau base were destroyed as the place was abandoned with the frozen Decepticon inside. In 2010, still recovering from both his wounds and his defeat in the Battle of Giza last year, Megatron discovered Shockwave in the abandoned base and freed his old friend from his icy prison, who then traveled back to Siberia to recover his pet who went underground after the crash.

(Back to the present...)

Since then it had been a minor Decepticon base on Earth. After their defeat in the Battle of Chicago, Shockwave and those loyal to Megatron retreated there to lick their wounds and prepare their next move. For the past three years, they've been digging under the Ural Mountains, slowly expanding the base through the natural structure while mining natural resources in order to convert them into badly-needed Energon.

In one of the underground rooms, Overkill, a 15-foot yellow and white Decepticon who had taken the alt-mode of a 2011 Bugatti Veyron 16.4 Super Sport Coupe, was manning a large machine that looked similar to a gate. Approaching him was Brawl, the 25-foot Decepticon Heavy Weapons Specialist and TiC of the forces here. If Shockwave nor Blackout were present, Brawl was in command of Megatron's loyalists.

"Any word from Shockwave?" asked the olive-drab and dark-grey cameo pattern 'Con.

"We've just received a transmission from him, sir. I'm activating the GroundBridge now," replied Overkill as he began pressing buttons on the terminal in front of him. Suddenly, a green portal appeared in front of them with several silhouettes in them. Finally, the group was through the portal with Shockwave at the front, followed by Starscream, Thundercracker, Long Haul, Mixmaster,
Rampage, Scrapper, Sideways, Barricade, Astrotrain and eight Decepticon Protoforms.

"Welcome back, Shockwave. I see that Lockdown has kept his agreement with you," commented Brawl as he greeted the Decepticon Scientist/Assassin. However, the tank 'Con's optics narrowed when he spotted Starscream.

"And he's even let me have the honor of offlining this traitor!" snarled Brawl as he approached the grey-tan Seeker, his left wrist-mounted Cybertanium Claw-Blades were looking fiercely sharp right now.

Starscream stepped back, trying to hide behind Shockwave. Despite his skills and being 6-feet taller than him, the Decepticon Air Commander knew that Brawl was no fan of him. The Heavy Weapons Specialist would've ripped Starscream apart if Shockwave hadn't intervene just now.

"Stand down, Brawl. Starscream has sworn loyalty to the Decepticon cause once more. After all, it's not like he can do much else," said the one-optic mech as he raised his left arm between the two 'Cons, ignoring the Seeker's glare at that last comment.

Brawl still looked like he wanted to skewer Starscream, but backed down. "Very well. Thundercracker, take Starscream with you and fill him in on our current objective. Then I want you two, along with Skywarp and Sunstorm, to prepare for patrol. Feel free to terminate this filth if he steps out of line," said Brawl, snarling the last part while glaring at Starscream.

"Understood," replied Thundercracker before he ushered the former Decepticon SiC along.

Shockwave turned to Astrotrain. "Take the rest of them to be repaired and fitted. Then have them prepare to move out," he ordered the Triple-Changer.

"Got it," replied Astrotrain before ushering Barricade, Sideways, the surviving Constructicons and Protoforms to follow him. Overkill had already shut down the GroundBridge and was going back to his business, leaving Shockwave and Brawl in the room.

"What is our current status?" asked Shockwave as the two of them began walking through the base, passing by more Decepticon Protoforms who either busy on their given assignments or were simply on guard duty.

"We've confirmed that Starscream and his forces in the Hawaiian Islands were the last major Decepticon rebel cell against us. I've already dispatched Incinerator and several Vehicons to assist him in salvaging anything of use," reported Brawl.

"And what of our current Vehicon forces?" asked Shockwave as the two passed by a very large factory below them. Once built to manufacture vehicles for the Soviet Army, now reconfigured to build the Decepticons' drone army, known as Vehicons. Although they have an impressive number of Decepticon warriors, the need for drones in order to make up for the losses they suffered in Chicago was necessary. Despite not having sparks of their own, the Vehicons did possessed sentience if only so that they can perform tasks that required thinking. The Vehicons' alt-modes were either cars, motorcycles, vans, tanks, jets, and helicopters with either black or grey color schemes. For the actual Decepticons, some took on either Earth-based alt-modes, while Shockwave preferred to keep his alt-mode of a Cybertronian MBT (Main-Battle-Tank).

"We have enough to complete two full-strength brigades at the moment. If we're efficient, we should have enough to complete an entire full-strength division by the end of this Earth year," replied Brawl. "However, the minimal amount of combat data we can put into them makes them no better than cannon fodder."
Shockwave nodded in agreement. Such were the things with Vehicons. Although they may possess strength in numbers and impressive firepower, it meant little if they had no combat experience. In most cases, Vehicons would have combat info downloaded into their CPUs to make them more efficient when in battle. With so little data to use, as well as what they have being slightly corrupted, the Vehicons wouldn't be well-suited for much in terms of important operations. Still they would suffice for now and would be more than capable of overwhelming human militaries, as well as small groups of Autobots when backed up by Decepticons.

"And our troops out on the field?" asked the one-optic mech as he and Brawl walked through a slide-door and into another room. The equipment in there signified it as the Medical Bay/Lab.

"Currently we have Stockade, Fracture, Dropkick, Payload, Swindle, Wreckage, Divebomb and Ramjet out there. The Signal Dampeners you've invented are hiding them from Cemetery Wind. Blackout also reported nothing new except that Lockdown's human partner isn't being *very* honest with his government," explained Brawl. "I believe we should send Barricade, Sideways and the four Constructicons out once they're fully repaired. They can fill in the missing spots."

"Agreed, Barricade's skills in eluding detection will be quite useful," said Shockwave.

"It is very unfortunate, though, that Demolishor, Scavenger, Scrapmetal, Overload and Hightower didn't survive Chicago. Without them, Long Haul, Mixmaster, Rampage and Scrapper won't be able to form Devastator," added Brawl.

"True. However, we will just have to make do with the four of them right now," replied Shockwave as the two of them entered a second, smaller room.

Inside the room was an operating table with the frame of a 16-foot dark-blue Seeker on it, with a mech towering over the former. The 19-foot Decepticon had a black and red scheme, a visor of his red optics, and possessed a secondary set of smaller arms that gave him an easier time with his work. This was Flatline, the Decepticon Chief Medical Officer/Master Surgeon. He also, occasionally, worked with Shockwave on certain projects related to his field of expertise back on Cybertron. Flatline didn't notice his visitors 'till he turned around.

"Ah, Commander Shockwave, Brawl. Glad to see that you two have arrived. I've just finished with the final touches on our old friend's new frame," reported Flatline as he revealed to them the Seeker's frame he had been working on. The mech's helm was the exact copy of a *very* familiar Decepticon TiC who many Autobots believed to have been killed-in-action at the Battle of Chicago. To the side, on a smaller table, was a large tube-like device holding a glowing spark that was surrounded in liquid Energon.

"Then let's begin," said Shockwave as he opened the Seeker's chestplates to reveal an empty spark-chamber as Flatline carefully pulled out the spark from the tube-like device. Brawl stood to the side, watching with eager optics, as Flatline very gently placed the spark into the empty chamber before Shockwave closed up the chestplates. After a few seconds, the Seeker's optics began to glow red as a gasp escaped its fanged mouthplates and its chassis jerked as it came to the sudden realization of being brought out of emergency stasis lock. Not the least surprised by its actions, Shockwave calmly approached the Seeker.

"Welcome back, Soundwave," said the one-optic mech to the newly-awoken Decepticon Communications Officer.

"What...happened?" croaked Soundwave as he tested out his newly-repaired voicebox.

"The shot from the Autobot Scout's weapon missed your spark-chamber by three inches, putting you
into emergency stasis lock instead," answered Flatline as he handed Soundwave a Datapad that contained the info of what had transpired since then. "Your original frame was so badly damaged beyond repair, had forced me and Shockwave to build you a new one from scratch. And you weren't the only one that he and I were able to bring back."

As if on cue, a familiar Cyber-Condor with a 114-inch wingspan, but painted in a navy-blue color scheme, flew down from the ceiling it was on and landed beside Soundwave. It let out a cawk as it stared at the reactivated Decepticon.

"Laserbeak," said Soundwave as he recognized his favorite Mini-Con pet.

"Yes, I managed to reactivate him by saving his spark and using what remained of both his and Ravage's frame, granting him some of the latter's weaponry too. Unfortunately, the damage to his helm was so severe that I had to divert power from everything but the basic functions to bring him back, that includes his ability to speak," explained Shockwave as Laserbeak landed on Soundwave's left forearm. "Nevertheless, he will still be useful to you."

"I have already found some human military UAVs that I think will be good choices for your new alt-mode," said Flatline as he led Soundwave out of the Medical Bay/Lab. At the same time, a 22-foot Decepticon Protoform came in before walking up towards Shockwave and Brawl.

"Sir, we've just detected an unusual energy source," reported the Protoform as he gave Shockwave a Datapad.

Taking the Datapad, the Scientist/Assassin began reading its contents. Suddenly, his single red optic widened in surprise. "This is impossible," muttered Shockwave before looking at the Protoform. "Check it again and then recheck it."

"We did, sir. There's absolutely no mistaking it," explained the Protoform as Shockwave handed the Datapad over to Brawl to look at. His optics widened as he read it. His faceplates showed an expression of complete disbelief just like Shockwave.

"How can this be?" asked Brawl in confusion.

"I don't know. But I do intend to find out a logical explanation for its sudden reemergence after all these years," replied Shockwave.

(Yeager Ranch, just outside of Paris, Texas)

"This is him?"

"But he's human!"

"Not entirely and you know that, brother!"

"Besides, wasn't the other one human too?"

"Yes, but his part is over."

"I'm not sure about this..."

"You dare question Primus?!"

"Silence, he's waking up."

As the sunlight struck his face, a weary Adam grunted as he tried to shield himself from the
unwelcomed light. However, he eventually cracked open his eyes as he pushed the soft pillow. That was what caught his attention, and Adam realized that he was in a room. A bedroom by the looks of it. It had a single, one-person bedroom, a closet, a window and a door that led outside. Near the bed was a small table and chair, with his backpack on top of the latter.

"What the hell was that?" muttered Adam to himself as tried to regain his senses. First was suddenly losing consciousness and then hearing those voices just now. None of it made sense to the young male.

'At least it was better than the nightmare that I usually have,' thought Adam before getting his act together. Right now, he had to focus on reaching Evac and Rewind.

Stretching, Adam got up and made his way over to his backpack, digging through it 'till he found what he was looking for: a custom-made radio that was designed to allow the young kid to communicate with Evac and Rewind in the event they got separated.

Flipping it on, Adam spoke in a hushed voice incase someone was eavesdropping from outside the room. "Rewind, Evac, can you guys hear me?"

"Adam, thank Primus," said Evac as his voice came in through the radio. "Rewind had to bail when those two humans came, but he left one of his components in your backpack."

Adam turned his attention back to his backpack and began rummaging through it. Sure enough, Adam saw a small Cybertronian that was the size of his hand, peeking out. It gave a brief wave towards the young kid, showing that it was okay. "Yeah, I found it. Where are you, guys?"

"We're just at the outskirts of Paris, not too far from the house you're currently in. We couldn't risk rescuing you because the humans might've contacted Cemetery Wind," explained Evac.

Suddenly, the doorknob began to turn, startling Adam. He quickly put the radio away just as the door fully opened. Walking inside was a man in his early thirties with short black hair. His skin was tan, mostly likely from being out in the sun and had a bit of a goatee around his chin. He wore a simple grey short-sleeve shirt and light-brown pants.

The man quickly noticed that Adam was awake. "Oh, good, you're up," said the man politely. "I was worried for a moment that we would had to take you to the hospital. You feel okay, now?"

Adam nodded. "Yes, thank you, mister..."

"Yeager, Cade Yeager. You can call me 'Cade' if you want," replied the now-named Cade. "Anyway, since you're up, you can join us for breakfast if you like. I already setup the shower and a toothbrush for you in the bathroom. It's right across from here."

"Thank you," said Adam. Cade nodded before walking back downstairs. As he did that, the young kid reorganized his stuff before putting his shoes on. He then reached out towards the Rewind component, which quickly shifted into a cellphone. Adam then put the mini-Cybertronian in his pocket before heading out.

After brushing his teeth, Adam soon walked into a small kitchen where a dining table was situated. Three chairs were put up, along with silverware, plates and glass cups too. Cade was finishing up from what appeared to be pancakes, while a second person was sitting at the table. This one was a female, in her late-teens, and had a very good figure with similar tanned skin just like Cade. However, she had long blonde hair instead of her father's black one. She wore a simple short-sleeve pink shirt and white jeans. She quickly put away her cellphone and gave Adam a kind smile, who
returned it as he tentatively sat down.

"This is my daughter, Tessa, by the way," said Cade as he got out a large bottle of apple juice.

Adam nodded towards Tessa. "Adam Nova," he said a bit shyly to the teenager.

"Nice to meet you, Adam," replied Tessa. "My dad here found you at some alleyway back in town while looking for junk... again," saying the last part exasperatedly.

"Hey, I'm telling you, Tessa, that truck I found will make enough money for you to get into college. You'll see," said Cade as he tried to defend himself before turning to Adam. "What were you doing at the edge of town, anyway?"

"I was traveling with my two childhood friends when we got separated. When I got here, I began looking for a place to spend the night," explained Adam.

"What about your parents, aren't they worried about you?" asked Cade as he passed out the cooked pancakes.

Adam was silent for a moment, a forlorn look on his face. Eventually, he replied: "Don't have any. My mom was killed by the Decepticons in Chicago when they invaded the city that night, and I never knew my dad."

There was silent pause as both father and daughter heard that, clearly not expecting to hear that this young kid was a survivor of the Battle of Chicago three years ago. Tessa sent her father a look, clearly saying to fix this. Seeing the look, Cade tried to remedy the issue. "Well, what about other family members?"

Shrugging his shoulders, Adam said: "Like I said, I never knew my dad. As for my mom's side of the family, apparently my grandfather was a drug-dealer who was sent to prison, and my grandma passed away a year after I was born. My disowned uncle hates me, saying it's my fault his sister has a hard time after she had me. So yeah, not many options for me."

"So you've been surviving this whole time?" asked Cade. Tessa kicked her father lightly under the table, silently scolding him for his abrupt question.

"I'm good with tech. A lot of people need help in that field, so I make money off of my skills," explained Adam as he ate a bit of pancake.

That made Cade intrigued. "Well, until your friends come to pick you up, you can stay with us," offered the man.

"Dad, you just want him to help you out with that old truck that you've brought in," commented Tessa with an eye roll.

As both father and daughter argued, Adam took a moment to consider the offer. Frankly, he was a bit surprised by it. From what he could tell so far, this man was having trouble supporting his daughter. However, until he could find a way to regroup with Evac and Rewind, Adam saw no other option. Plus, it gave him a chance to try and get close to the other Autobot, and get him out there in the off-chance that either Cade or Tessa decided to call Cemetery Wind through their fake advertisement ad.

"Sure," was all he said.
Chapter End Notes

The part of Shockwave coming to Earth after Megatron and being studied by the Soviets is explained in the Rising Storm comic.

Yes, in real-life, the Soviets WERE the first ones to successfully create the world's first nuclear power plant in 1954 at Obninsk.

In this altered take, Cade and his family are NOT completely broke.

Next chapter will have action and a major plot twist.
Meetings, Pursuit and Escape

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

(Somewhere in Oklahoma...)

Driving through a suburb town in the Sooner State, a white 2007 Pontiac Solstice GXP Weekend Club Racer Concept with blue racing stripes, could be seen driving down the streets with a familiar 2006 GMC TopKick, but was colored in red. While the duo may have looked completely normal to the eyes of passing humans, they were in fact the Autobots Jazz and Ironhide respectively. Despite their original alt-modes having been canceled in manufacturing, they've decided to use different color schemes in order to stay out of Cemetery Wind's sight. The two were currently scanning for any Energon signatures in the state, hoping to find a clue to Optimus' current whereabouts. About a week ago, Wheeljack had picked up their leader's signature, with Optimus being hounded by Cemetery Wind. Immediately, the Autobots had split into groups in order to search for him in the states neighboring New Mexico. So far, they've had little luck; there was just too many places where Optimus could be at, and with Cemetery Wind no doubt also looking for him, the others had to be careful not to be discovered themselves.

"I'm not getting anything on the long-range scanners. What about you, Jazz?" asked Ironhide.

"Nothing, no sign that Optimus even came through this state," replied the Saboteur as the duo made a left turn, heading towards the town's outskirts.

For the last week, the Autobots in Jazz's group had been searching for their leader. They had gotten lucky when Wheeljack had picked up Optimus' location and were preparing to head towards New Mexico to regroup with him. However, their plans changed when they spotted multiple Cemetery Wind Operatives and vehicles near the area where Optimus was. They had waited for some time before they managed to catch a radio transmission from Cemetery Wind Field Commander James Savoy to his superior, reporting that Optimus had escaped, much to the Autobots' relief.

Afterwards, Jazz had the Autobots head out into groups of either two, three or four, searching the neighboring states for any sign of Optimus. The Autobot TiC figured that they would have a better chance to find Prime if they split up. Also, a group of twelve vehicles moving together would attract a lot of unwanted attention. So far, they had no luck in finding Optimus, but at least Cemetery Wind didn't find him either, which was better than the alternative.

Back to the present, Ironhide and Jazz had just exited the local road. As they got onto the highway, their comms came to life. "Hound to Jazz and Ironhide. Y'all read me?"

"We read ya, Hound. What's your status?" asked Jazz. Hound, along with Ratchet, Mirage and Wheeljack were checking out Arizona. While Crosshairs, Sideswipe and Jolt were searching in Colorado.

"A whole lot of nothing. We thought we had a lead when we intercepted a transmisson from that CW Field Commander regarding a Cybertronian sighting. Turns out it was a false alarm. The others say they haven't had much luck either. Still no word from Bumblebee's group in Utah, though," reported the Commando.

To be honest, Ironhide was more worried about the young Scout than their leader. It had been a month since Jazz's group had rescued Bumblebee and his group from that CW task force, and it was
clear that 'Bee was not in his right mind. Every now and then, Bumblebee would have small scenes of rage, and the only ones who can calm him down were the Heavy Weapons Specialist and Arcee, hence why the latter was with him, along with Drift.

Though the yellow mech wouldn't explain what was troubling him, Ironhide knew why. Hound had told him and the others of what had happened during the fight at the old factory complex. It was only natural that Sam's brutal murder would hit Bumblebee very hard. The two of them had been close, almost like brothers, and both of them had been through a lot ever since the Battle of Mission City. And 'Bee had failed to protect him and his wife. To lose Sam and Mikaela like that...the others were concerned that 'Bee might do something very reckless. It would be the same for Ironhide and his former human charges: the Lennox Family. He and Will were close friends when NEST was commissioned in 2007 after Mission City. Sarah, Will's wife and soulmate, had earned his respect. And Ironhide was close to his youngest charge, Annabelle, whom he and Chromia treated like their own Sparkling.

Ironhide had been with Sarah and Annabelle when Cemetery Wind launched their unsanctioned assault on Autobot City. However, the black mech had learned of the attack only a day later when he received Optimus' message. Ironhide then contacted Will, who was at the Pentagon, telling him that he'll be gone for a unknown period of time. Afraid of what might happen to Will's family, Ironhide took both Sarah and Annabelle to Robert Epps' house, where they will stay with him and his wife, Monique, until things settle down. Although no one said it out loud, both Sarah and Will knew that their Autobot family guardian would have to leave them for an unknown period of time. It was a heartbreaking scene, with Annabelle crying and screaming, while being held back by her mom as 'Hide drove off after dropping them off at Robert's house.

The Heavy Weapons Specialist was brought out of his thoughts when he and Jazz's comms came back to life. This time it was Drift. "Autobots, we may have a found lead on Sensei's position."

"I'll take any news I can get. What's the downplay, Drift?" asked Jazz.

"We've detected an Energon signature matching Sensei's, who's somewhere in Texas. Arcee thinks that he may have taken refuge in one of the local towns there and may have taken a different alt-mode. Unfortunately, we're having trouble in locating his exact position," explained Drift.

"It's not much, but we'll have to take what we can get," noted Ironhide.

"Agreed. Drift, I want you and your team to hold your positions. 'Hide and I will notify the others and we'll rendezvous with you in an hour or two," ordered Jazz.

"Understood, we'll be waiting."

(Back with Adam Nova...)

The young kid didn't really believe in luck. To him, luck was something to people who were either very superstitious or very gullible to believe in it. The past three years of Adam's life had taught him that in order to survive in the world, you need to work hard, stay focused and don't show any signs of intimidation. Today, however, was something different.

In the last five hours he had been with the Yeager Family, Adam had learned more about them. Cade and his late wife had conceived Tessa when they were still in high school, and were forced to forsake their education in order to raise their daughter. Currently, the senior Yeager himself was an inventor, bringing in hopes of finding himself some breakthrough. As for Tessa; it turns out she has a Irish-American boyfriend who's a rally car driver, but she begged Adam not to tell her father. Besides that, she was exasperated with Cade's constant work as an inventor and wished her father
would find a real job.

Currently, Adam was in Cade's barn with his backpack, overlooking the rundown Marmon Cabover Truck that Cade had brought in yesterday from the old theater. With them was Cade's crass-humored friend, Lucas Flannery. The young kid impressed the two adults with his skills in machinery by repairing an old radio, a dead engine, and even got them free Wi-Fi. All the while, the Rewind component was scanning the emergency stasis locked Autobot, trying to find out its designation.

Eventually, the trio got to work on the Marmon, while Adam was trying to find a way of communicating with the Autobot, or at least bringing it out of emergency stasis lock. Unfortunately, Cade made the discovery when he tried to remove the Marmon's engine.

"I think we just found a Transformer," said Cade to Tessa and Lucas, while Adam was examining the Autobot's interior. Ignoring the argument between Cade and Lucas, the kid finally noticed the Autobot insignia on top of the Marmon's grille, covered in dust and a bit faded. Without even thinking, his prosthetic left hand gently touched the symbol.

The moment his artificial fingers brushed against it, sparks of electrical energy ran across the Autobot insignia. Following that, the Marmon came to life, shifting its plating, wheels and any other parts it had. Adam took a few steps back as the other three humans let out cries of surprise and shock as the Cybertronian came to life.

"What the fuck?!" cried out Lucas as he, Adam, Cade and Tessa continued to back up as the Autobot began to change into its biped form.

The mech was 28-feet tall, and if he wasn't kneeling on one leg, he would've broken through the barn's roof. His entire chassis was covered with damaged or missing parts, and you could've barely even see a little bit of his spark-chamber. In his left servo was an Ion Pump-Action Shotgun that matched its owner's appearance.

With a roar, the Autobot waved his weapon in the air, sending objects flying all over the barn. The humans ducked for cover, trying to avoid the mech's rampage.

"AUTOBOTS?! AUTOBOTS, REPORT!!" cried the mech as he looked around with a wild look in his blue-colored optics. "ELITA! WHERE ARE YOU, ELITA?!"

'Elita?' thought Adam. Evac had mentioned that name once, an Autobot and the eldest sister of three femmes, who was also the sparkmate of the Autobot Leader. Which meant that this mech was...

"Optimus?" called out the young kid as he moved away from his cover, despite the protests of the others. "Optimus Prime?" repeated Adam as he watched as some signs of sanity began to form in the mech's optics.

"Adam, what the hell are you doing?" asked Cade as he trying to figure out what the kid was up to.

Adam ignored him as he was focusing on calming down the Autobot Leader. Optimus' optics settled on the young teen before giving him a brief scan. He took notice of Adam's prosthetic left arm and the digital wristwatch he had on him. Said wristwatch transformed, revealing a small Cybertronian that was now on Adam's right shoulder.

"Autobot..." muttered Optimus as he finally began to calm down as he put his Ion Pump-Action Shotgun away before sitting. Seeing that the mech had came to his senses, the other three humans slowly got out of their hiding spots. Cautiously, Cade approached Adam, looking at the small Mini-Con on the kid's right shoulder before looking back at Optimus.
"Mind explaining yourself, kid?" asked Cade.

Now that the whole fiasco had stopped, Adam looked between Cade, Tessa, Lucas and Optimus, the latter now fully calmed down, was looking between the four humans and the small Cybertronian.

Adam sighed. "Right, where do I begin?"

(With Evac...)

The blue Junior Knight of Cybertron drove through the small town of Paris, taking care not to drive on the same road twice. He already had updated his alt-mode: a 2013 Jeep Wrangler Flattop Concept. Hiding in the backseat was Rewind, with his left forearm missing. The pair had been contacted by Adam again, who said that he was staying with the Yeagers in order to help them repair the Autobot they found, and then wait for the perfect time to meet up with them.

As Evac made a right turn around the corner, Rewind commented: "I don't like it. Just waiting here is a good way to get offline."

"We only have a few options," replied Evac as he made a left turn. "We're not leaving Adam behind, along with a fellow Autobot who's heavily injured."

"I know that, Evac," said Rewind. "It's just the thought of leaving Adam alone with three human strangers makes me unsettled. What if something happens and we're not there."

Suddenly, the Mini-Con cut himself off with a faraway look appearing in his optics.

"Rewind?" asked Evac, who was surprised at his friend's sudden silence.

"The component I left with Adam just contacted me," explained the Mini-Con. "He's in trouble."

Before Evac could ask, the two of them saw a convoy of eighteen black-painted vehicles that consisted of fifteen 2007 Chevrolet Suburban 1500 LS SUVs, two 2011 Local Motors Rally Fighters and one International MaxxPro Dash DXM MRAPV (Mine-Resistant-Ambush-Protected-Vehicle), all drove right past them. The tinted windows on the Suburbans, MaxxPro and Rally Fighters made it difficult for humans to see what was inside them, but not Rewind and Evac. They were surprised to see that nobody was driving the two Rally Fighters, but they could see that the people in both the Suburbans and MaxxPro were in full tactical gear and were heavily-armed. Evac didn't need the time to process who these men were and where they were heading.

"We gotta move, now!"

(Back with Adam...)

An hour had passed since the whole incident, and now Adam, Optimus and Cade were inside the barn. After a heated argument between his daughter and Lucas, Cade eventually won on his decision that he was going to help repair Optimus, with Adam's help. Tessa went back to her room while her father sent Lucas into Paris to pickup the materials he needed in order to fix the Autobot Leader. In a short time, the two humans had managed to bond with Optimus and earning his trust. During that time, the trio were discussing about how the mech came to his current predicament and how Adam was traveling with a pair of Autobots.

"So, you're saying, that little guy is actually a part of a child-sized Cybertronian," summarized Cade as he pointed a wrench at the tiny Mini-Con who had shifted back into its digital wristwatch mode.

"And the rest of him is with a larger Autobot, here in Paris. Did I get all that?"
"Pretty much," replied Adam.

"I remember Evac," commented Optimus. At first, he was hesitant to trust these two humans, but Cade and Adam were eventually able to convince the Autobot Leader that they wouldn't harm him or sell out his current location to Cemetery Wind. But now, he was comfortable with speaking to them. "I never met him in person, but I do remember that he was the youngest mech to join the Knights of Cybertron. An ancient order of warriors who were dedicated to protecting Cybertron, while upholding the beliefs of Primus," continued Optimus before he gave Adam a curious glance. "But why would you travel with one of my Autobots? You said your mom was killed in the Battle of Chicago, was she not? Both the American public and Congress blamed us for that terrible incident."

A sad look began to form on the young teen's face as he remembered the moment his mom was completely disintegrated into a pile of bones and slightly burnt clothing by one of the Orbital Assault Fighters twin-mounted Energon Wave Cannons as the Decepticons invaded the 'Windy City' that night. But eventually, he said: "I wasn't too keen on staying with a bunch of strangers or be in foster care. Besides, it was the Decepticons and that human traitor, Dylan Gould, not the Autobots, that were the ones who killed my mom. She always said that 'life is like a tapestry, filled with different colors and not just black and white'. It wasn't that hard to decipher."

"Amen to that, brother," commented Cade in agreement.

Optimus nodded. "Indeed, your mom sounded like a very wise woman. I'm grateful to know that not all of the American public sees me and my Autobots as monsters."

The rest of the time went by quickly, with Optimus and Cade conversing about the similarities of both a Cybertronian's spark and a human's soul. However, that ended when the sound of several engines could be heard outside. The trio began to worry, which only increased when Tessa came into the barn with a concerned and worried look written on her face. "Dad, a bunch of black-painted vehicles drove up here. Some guy said that he and his group got a call about a Transformer being spotted here."

Cade cursed under his breath, knowing who it was that sold out Optimus' location to Cemetery Wind. "Lucas," he muttered before looking at the Autobot Leader and Adam. "Optimus, I need you to hide while I'll try to send them away. Adam, I want you to hide too. Something's telling me that these guys are not really good with kids."

Adam nodded as he quickly grabbed his backpack before hiding behind some shelves filled with objects, while Optimus transformed back into his alt-mode, trying to cloak his Energon signature. Once they were out of sight, Cade went outside the barn before closing the door behind him. A minute later, Adam could hear voices outside, talking rather loudly. One was Cade, and yet the other was strangely familiar. Acting on instincts, Adam immediately contacted Rewind and Evac before the barn doors opened again as the Rewind component slipped into Adam's right pants' pocket.

Looking through the openings between junk, the young teen could make out eight armed Cemetery Wind Operatives entering the barn, looking for Optimus. The one in front and the one in the back were each holding a short-beam Energon Detector in their hands. One CW Operative was only a few feet away from Adam's hiding spot. The kid tried to move back a bit, but he accidentally jostled an empty paint bucket with his right foot. Unfortunately, all eight CW Operatives heard it and slowly made their way towards the shelf that Adam was hiding behind.

"Shit," mouthed the teen as one of the operatives with the handheld short-beam Energon Detectors got closer to his position. Slowly, Adam pulled out his M26C Taser Stun Gun from his pants' left pocket, waiting until the operative's left leg peeked behind the shelf before lunging.
Cade mentally cursed himself as he looked at his current predicament. He had to say 'him' instead of 'it' when talking. Now he, Tessa and Lucas were on the ground with guns trained on them. And then there was this man, James Savoy, clearly the leader of this Transformer kill squad. The moment Cade saw him in his trenchcoat and wearing aviator sunglasses, warning bells went off in his head, telling him that this man was extremely dangerous. Cade's worries were realized when Savoy ordered his men to pin the trio onto the ground, with one of his subordinates putting a 3rd Generation Glock 17 Pistol to the back of Tessa's head.

Suddenly, a pained scream from inside the barn got everyone's attention. Cade realized the scream belonged to one of the eight operatives who went inside. What came next were multiple voices letting out sounds of surprise, followed quickly by anger and annoyance, then accompanied by movement.

The barn doors opened a little, and several people came out. Two of the CW Operatives were dragging a fiercely struggling Adam towards Savoy. Behind them, the third operative was carrying Adam's backpack as two more operatives were helping the sixth one out of the barn, who was clearly showing signs of pain as he was making an occasional twitch now and then. Finally, the last two operatives came out, with the eighth operative looked at Savoy and shook his head, telling the CW Field Commander that no Energon signatures were found in there.

"We found this brat hiding behind a shelf in the barn," said the third operative as the two men dragging Adam dumped him at Savoy's feet.

"He damaged Pierce's Energon Detector before he tazed Galleta in the nuts," added the first operative as he gestured at the twitching man.

Ouch, Cade had to sympathize with the poor bastard. That had to hurt. Yet, Yeager couldn't help but feel pleased at Adam's action. But that quickly changed to dread and worry at what Savoy might do to the kid, as he feared that the Cemetery Wind Field Commander would do whatever it takes to find his prey.

However, the former Green Beret had a look of sheer surprise in his eyes that were covered by his aviator sunglasses before it changed to smugness, followed by an unfriendly smile on the older man's face. "Well, well. It's been a long time, Adam. You seem to be doing well after these past three years," he said mockingly.

"UNCLE??" Cade's eyes nearly popped out of their sockets at what he had just heard. This bastard was Adam's UNCLE?! And by the look of it, it was very clear that these two were not on the best of terms with one another. However, that's when Cade recalled something that Adam said a while ago: 'My uncle hates me, saying that it's my fault that his sister has a hard time after she had me.'

Looking at them now, Cade could only see how dead right Adam was about his uncle.

Meanwhile, the young teen just kept on glaring at Savoy as he kept talking: "Gotta admit that I'm still surprised to see you here, Adam. I thought you died in Chicago three years ago."
"Yeah, I bet that would make you really happy, Savoy," replied Adam sarcastically. "Probably more happier if my mom had lived instead of me."

That made James frown a little as he didn't like his late sister being brought up. "At least Sophia wouldn't have someone pulling her down."

"She'd hated you and the rest of her family because of how messed up you all were," snapped Adam.

A growl escaped Savoy's lips as he restrained himself from slapping the young teen, before motioning to two of his men to bring Adam back up to his knees.

"Seeing how the grown-ups and the girl aren't being so cooperative," said James as he glanced at the trio on the ground. "Why don't you tell me where Prime is. You know who that is, right?"

"Yeah, I know who you're talking about, Savoy," responded the young teen. "But makes you think that I know where he is?"

What happened next was the most unexpected and terrifying thing that happened that day. James reached into his trenchcoat and pulled out a Salient Arms International Tier One Glock 34 Pistol from his left shoulder-holster, clicking the safety off before racking it, and fired a single 9x19mm Parabellum FMJ round that tore right through Lucas' forehead. Cade's friend fell straight to the flat ground, dead. His blood slowly starting to paint the grass red.

The reactions that happened were natural: Tessa screamed her lungs out in horror at the sight of Lucas' corpse. Cade could only look in stunned silence, eyes wide, as if trying to comprehend that his friend was now dead. Adam also showed some shock, clearly not expecting Savoy to do something like that. The CW Operatives instead pointed the tips of their weapons' barrels at the back of the heads of their captives, minus Adam.

"Maybe that will serve as a motivator," said James as he aimed his sidearm directly between Adam's eyes. There was no emotion in his voice, no pain, remorse or regret whatsoever. Just pure apathy, The CW Field Commander was clearly fine with killing them all. "Now, I'm going to ask again, nephew. Where is Optimus Prime?"

As if deciding enough is enough, said mech sprang into action. Transforming into his biped form, Optimus smashed through the barn, dive-rolling forward with his Ion Blaster out, all thoughts of hiding gone.

"HERE. I. AM!!" roared the Autobot Leader with each round he fired. Cemetery Wind Operatives were thrown into the air with two dead and eight wounded before hitting the ground. With their captors' attention focused on Optimus, Cade, Tessa and Adam were able to free themselves and began running. Adam was able to retrieve his backpack, while Cade grabbed one of the hovering Dragonfly Mini-Drones that Cemetery Wind was using and put it in his right coat pocket before running over to where Adam and Tessa were at as the trio took cover from the firefight that was happening around them.

"Cade, they're going to kill you! Get Tessa and Adam out of here!" yelled Optimus as he continued firing at more CW Operatives.

From on top of a nearby silo grain, Lockdown observed the firefight at the Yeager Ranch. "Hangnail, Prime's surfaced. I'll deal with him. Pursue the secondary target," ordered the Bounty Hunter.
"Understood," replied Hangnail from down below, already in his alt-mode of a dark-grey 2008 Ford Explorer America Concept. As he took off, Lockdown powered up his dual shoulder-mounted Three-Tubed Micro-Rocket/Missile Launchers before firing a salvo of MHEIRs (Micro-High-Explosive-Incendiary-Rockets), startling the kids playing down below at the nearby baseball field.

Meanwhile, Cade, Tessa and Adam ran for it as Lockdown's rockets rained down around them, easily destroying both the house and the barn. A few CW Operatives were trying to go around and cut them off, when suddenly, a white 2013 Chevrolet Sonic RS Rally Car with a black-painted hood appeared out of nowhere and causing the operatives to duck, though one had his baseball cap knocked off his head by a wheel. The rally car made a hard right turn in front of the fleeing trio. Opening the right passenger door was an 18-year-old man with short blonde hair. "Hurry, get in!" he shouted in a Irish-accent.

What happened next was a combination of both awesome driving and awkward introductions. The driver, Shane Dyson, was Tessa's boyfriend that Adam had learned about. He tried to introduce himself to Cade, as said person was really annoyed at the fact that Shane was already in a relationship with his daughter that he didn't know about. And also because Cade wanted him to focus on the road they were on as they were currently being chased by eight Suburbans and the two Rally Fighters. The chase took them through the nearby cornfields, where they managed to cause one of the Suburbans to crash into a tree due to the dust blinding the driver, and were currently driving through the town of Paris.

That's when Adam noticed a newcomer joining in the chase. "There's a Ford Explorer chasing us too," he said, getting Shane's attention.

Following behind the two Rally Fighters and the remaining seven Suburbans was Hangnail. The Mercenary was slowly catching up to the CW vehicles, as Savoy (who was in one of the Suburbans) gave his men the 'ok' signal to let Hangnail through since he had already seen his alt-mode before in Hawaii. The group were slowly gaining on the Sonic RS as said rally car passed an intersection. As Shane's Sonic RS drove by, a familiar blue Jeep Wrangler drove on the intersecting road, passing the red light.

"Evac!" shouted Adam as he spotted his Autobot friend.

At that moment, one would have to see the scene in slow-motion. As he reached the center of the intersection, Evac transformed into his biped form and performing a sideways roll in the process. Deploying his dual forearm-mounted Concussion Blasters, the blue Autobot opened up on the CW vehicles. The Suburbans, who were at the front of the group, took the full brunt of the attack. Six of them were sent flying in flames, except for the seventh Suburban that Savoy was in as the driver managed to make a hard left turn, barely avoiding the bolt meant for them, but they crashed into the wall of a nearby building instead. Meanwhile, Rewind jumped out of Evac upon his transformation before activating his hidden jetpack mounted on his back and took to the air with a Photon Pulse Carbine in his right servo. The Mini-Con immediately flew to catch up with Adam.

"Holy shite!" shouted Shane as he watched the entire thing from his rearview mirror.

Cade, who was also amazed at Evac's entrance, quickly realized that these two Autobots were Adam's friends.

Hangnail, upon seeing Evac, transformed into his biped form and the two mechs engaged one another in servo-to-servo combat. But it was the two Rally Fighters that really did the unexpected. As they neared Evac and Hangnail, the two vehicles began to suddenly break apart into hundreds of thousands of tiny cubic-sized nanobots that flew right past the two fighting mechs, much to their surprise. Then the two metallic swarms began to reconfigure and reshape into the solid mass of two
17-foot Transformer Drones with permanently affixed battlemasks with T-shaped visors over their optics. The two drones continued their pursuit of the fleeing humans, knocking aside vehicles and whatever else that got in their way. Evac had little time to comment as he continued his fight with Hangnail.

"What the hell?! I didn't know that Transformers could do that!" yelled Cade as he watched the whole thing take place.

"They can't!" replied Adam.

All the while, Rewind had landed on top of Shane's rally car and reattached the component of himself that he had left with Adam. With both arms, the Mini-Con can now wield his weapon better. Rewind began firing his Photon Pulse Carbine at the two pursuing Rally Fighter Drones. While small, Rewind's weapon was still powerful enough to cause the two to dodge his shots. One of the drones opened up with its right forearm-mounted M134G Minigun at the Sonic RS.

Back with Evac, the Autobot was still brutally duking it out with Hangnail as the two mechs were smashing each other into the nearby buildings. The surviving CW Operatives had finally recovered and upon Savoy's orders, began firing at Evac from a distance. Civilians had already fled the area, not wanting to be caught up in the brawl. Evac dodged a punch from Hangnail by ducking before wrapping both of his arms around the Mercenary's waist and pushing him down on the ground. The Autobot followed it up by delivering several punches to Hangnail's faceplates before being distracted by .56x45mm NATO Armor-Piercing/Tracer rounds being fired from Savoy and the other Cemetery Wind Operatives. One of the operatives fired a 40x46mmSR HEDP round from his HK69A1 Grenade Launcher that struck Evac's left shoulder, forcing him off of Hangnail.

The Mercenary immediately brought out his Photon Battle Rifle from subspace and began firing several concentrated projectiles at Evac. The rounds just scorched the Autobot's armor, making him grunt in pain. However, Evac ignored the pain as he knew that he would be overwhelmed if he didn't. Also seeing how Adam was still in need of help, he figured that right now would be a good time to withdraw. So he grabbed Hangnail and before the Mercenary could react, Evac tossed him straight towards the hostile humans. Savoy and his men ceased firing in order to get out of the oncoming Cybertronian. Hangnail impacted several nearby cars and a wall, causing debris to fall on top of him. With them currently disoriented, Evac quickly transformed into his alt-mode and took off, hoping to catch up with Adam and Rewind.

Two minutes later, Hangnail managed to get his processor unscrambled and dig himself out of the rubble. Rubbing his helm, he contacted Lockdown. "Hangnail to Lockdown, secondary target has temporarily eluded me."

"Explain," demanded the Bounty Hunter through the comms.

"Two more Autobots appeared during the pursuit. I tangled with one of them before he tossed me aside and half-buried me. Two of those human-made drones are currently pursuing them," explained Hangnail as he got up before subspacing his Photon Battle Rifle.

"Unscramble yourself and continue the chase. I'm currently after Optimus. By my calculations, we'll meet up somewhere along the way," ordered Lockdown.

"Understood," replied Hangnail as he prepared to change into his alt-mode. However, he was stopped when Savoy approached him with an unpleased look on his face.

"You mind telling me what that was all about? I was under the impression that you and your boss were after Prime," said the CW Field Commander, clearly having not expecting Hangnail to
suddenly appear and chase after the four humans.

"That is none of your concern, human," growled the Mercenary as he transformed into his alt-mode before adding: "Now, I suggest you reorganize your men if you wish to capture them." The disguised Ford Explorer then took off, leaving behind a disgruntled James Savoy.

*Back with Cade and company...*

The drones were persistent, they had to be given that much credit. They had transformed back into their alt-modes as the car chase shifted shortly onto the highway, before Shane drove towards an abandoned factory near the parking garage. Rewind, having entered the Sonic RS, was firing from the back seat while standing in the middle with Tessa and Adam. Said boy was digging through his backpack for something.

In a different part of the factory, Optimus Prime appeared at the same time with Lockdown right on his tail. The two mechs shifted into their biped forms and engaged one another on the rooftops. While down below, the two Rally Fighter Drones had transformed again and were trying to cut the four humans and Mini-Con off.

"Shit! We got one behind us and the other in front us!" shouted Cade as he looked at their predicament.

At that moment, Adam gave a cry of triumph as he finally found what he was looking for. Pulling his right arm from out of the backpack, the young teen was now holding a silver round-like object that was the size of a baseball. "Shane, I need you to drive close enough at the one right in front of us for me to hit it with this!" he ordered.

"Are you mad?!" asked Cade incredulously. "You want him to drive right at that thing?!

"Unless you have a better idea, Cade, then I'm open to suggestions right now," retorted Adam as he began twisting sections of the sphere to the right and to the left.

"He's got a point, Mr. Yeager," added Shane as he shifted the gear on the rally car. "Hang on, everyone!" he yelled as he pressed on the gas-pedal, hard. The Sonic RS roared as it charged straight towards the drone, with the second one following behind. The Rally Fighter Drone at the front prepared to impale the rally car with its clawed servos, but just as it came into range, Adam stuck his right arm out and threw the sphere right at the drone's chestplates. Seconds later, the sphere detonated and released a pulse of electricity that caused the Rally Fighter Drone to go rigid. This gave Shane enough time to drive right underneath it, but not enough to stop as he crashed into the parking garage's wall. The second Rally Fighter Drone, unaware of what had just happened, crashed into its partner and sending them both to the ground. Rewind took the chance and fired his Photon Pulse Carbine at the first drone's helm, blowing it to pieces.

"Yeah! Nice shot, Rewind!" cheered Adam.

Said Mini-Con subspaced his weapon, a proud look written on his faceplates. "Feels nice to finally hit something," he commented.

"What the hell was that thing?" asked Cade as he was amazed at what that gadget just did. Meanwhile, Shane was trying to start up his Sonic RS with Tessa's help, but to no avail.

"A Disruptor Grenade that I made. Releases a mini-EMP blast that can stun or short-circuit a Cybertronian's motor functions," answered Adam as he was pleased that his invention had worked.

Their victory was short-lived as the second Rally Fighter Drone got up, its clawed servos at the
ready. Fortunately, it was at that moment when Evac showed up, driving straight towards the man-
made drone before transforming into his biped form and jumping into the air at the same time. Using
the momentum, the blue Autobot delivered a devastating kick to the midsection of the drone's
chassis, tearing it in half and offlineing it instantly.

"Alright, Evac!" cried out Adam as he got out of the Sonic RS, backpack in hand. He was followed
by Rewind, then Cade, Tessa and Shane soon after. The young teen stopped for a moment to pickup
some parts from one of the two destroyed Rally Fighter Drones before putting them in his backpack.
At that moment, Optimus appeared, having managed to momentarily disable Lockdown by tossing
him into a crane cable. The Autobot Leader gave a quick nod to Evac before checking his human
friends.

"Let's get out of here before they call for reinforcements," suggested Evac.

"Agreed, lets roll," ordered Optimus as he and Evac transformed into their respective alt-modes.

Needing no further encouragement, Cade, Tessa and Shane got into Optimus, while Adam and
Rewind entered Evac. With their precious cargo inside, the two Autobots took off, away from
Lockdown, Hangnail and Cemetery Wind. For the moment, they had escaped, but now all of them
were targets.

Chapter End Notes

Bet you didn't see THAT coming, Savoy being Adam's biological uncle. Next chapter
will be the Autobot reunion you have all been waiting for. Be sure to leave comments.
Reunions and Declarations

Chapter Notes

I'm also planning to do a separate story that shows my notes for the vehicles, weapons, and personnel for Cemetery Wind.

Now on with the chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

(Washington D.C)

Harold Attinger, CIA agent and the Director of Cemetery Wind, was unhappy. In fact, he was very pissed off. James Savoy knew this from his secured live video feed outside of Paris, Texas as he calmly watched his superior pace back and forth in his soundproof office. The causality list from the failed op to capture Optimus Prime a second time was ten dead, twenty wounded, eight Suburbans wrecked beyond repair, and the two Rally Fighter Drones destroyed along with one of their Dragonfly Mini-Drones being stolen by one of the humans harboring the Autobot Leader as they fled the scene.

"He was right there. Right there!" exclaimed Attinger in both anger and frustration as he slammed his left fist down onto his desk. "And your team missed him! How the hell could you let Prime escaped?!"

James wasn't the least fazed by Harold's angry face staring directly at the TV screen that the live feed was being shown on, having been use to his moments of rage now. It was one of the reasons why he was Attinger's field man. The former Green Beret was the only person who could withstand his superior's wrath and wasn't afraid to speak back. "We weren't prepared when two more Autobots appeared to help the runaways. Then even managed to destroy those two drones KSI gave us."

Attinger swore again before sitting back down in his chair. He had calmed down a bit, and now he seemed more anxious than angry. "We need to find Prime so we can get the Seed, and fast," he muttered.

"Don't tell me that idiot is actually giving you grief?" asked Savoy, referring to the White House Deputy Chief of Staff who was Cemetery Wind's liaison to the President.

"No, but SecDef is," answered Attinger with a sigh.

Now that made Savoy frown, a hint of worry growing inside him.

Officially, Cemetery Wind had been formed as the successor of NEST to hunt down any remaining Decepticons. The part of them hunting down Autobots was kept as a very carefully guarded secret from the White House, the Pentagon and the rest of the CIA. Along with their deal with both Lockdown and KSI too; hell, KSI's CEO, Joshua Joyce, was unaware of that fact as well. However, while Congress might be pissed that Attinger was misusing their funds to support the creation of a drone army without their knowledge and permission, not many politicians would mind if all Transformers were killed off.
Except for John Keller, the United States Secretary of Defense. Ever since their first victory against the Decepticons in the Battle of Mission City, Keller had been a firm ally of the Autobots since then. He supported many of the Autobots' decisions (so long as they were reasonable), such as leaving the Matrix of Leadership in Optimus' servos. And he had been among one of the most vocal against disbanding NEST, due to the group's experience with fighting Decepticons, as well as their close bond with the Autobots, as they were invaluable in handling further Decepticon incursions. Keller was also equally against the creation of Cemetery Wind, clearly showing his personal distrust with Attinger and his black ops unit. And just like the rest of the U.S Government, Keller knew absolutely nothing of Attinger's dealings with Lockdown and KSI. There have been times in the past when Keller would push for a report on the group's current activities, along with requesting a meeting with the Autobots, but Harold had always been able to rebuff him. From the look of things however, Savoy could only assume that this time, it was serious.

"He's been hammering down on us more than ever," explained Attinger. "Wanting to know about our recent activities, even continuing to ask about the incident down in Cuba last year. Along with that, his questions about what we're doing with the bodies, meeting with the Autobots, and our current actions in the country are becoming harder to ignore. At this rate, he'll bring his complaints directly to both the President and Congress."

Harold then turned directly at the screen as he faced Savoy, neither of them showed any emotions as Attinger continued: "Now do you see why we need the Seed soon? If we can't capture Prime and hand him over to Lockdown, that Bounty Hunter won't give it to us. Without the Seed, we won't be able to supply KSI with an abundant supply of Cybertronian metal. And when we're unable to continue funding them, Joyce will figure out what's been going on and will most likely rat us out to the White House to save his own skin. And then the two of us will be sent to The Hague. Understand?"

"Understood, I'll tell my team and the others to redouble their efforts," replied Savoy calmly.

"Before you go, I want to ask you about this nephew of yours," said Attinger as he moved back further into his chair. "Will he be a problem?"

Without even a moment of hesitation, the former U.S Army Master Sergeant answered coldly: "Of course not."

Harold nodded, pleased with that response. It was one of the reasons why he trusted James, the former Green Beret knew how to get things done and didn't let anything or anyone stop him and his team from completing their goal. "Good, keep me updated. In the meantime, I need to meet up with Joyce about supplying us with more drones. If the Autobots do regroup, just our men aren't going to cut it."

And with that, Attinger terminated the live video link.

(Decepticon Base)

"It appears things went poorly on this second attempt as well," summarized Shockwave calmly. He was currently talking to Lockdown through a video screen in his private quarters.

"Don't act so calm, Shockwave! I have no time for it!" yelled the Bounty Hunter, who was clearly unhappy about the recent events. "My employers are becoming more agitated that I have yet to deliver Prime to them, and those human bugs are not helping!"

"What about the rest of your subordinates? Surely they could assist you in apprehending Optimus," suggested Shockwave.
"The Knight's Ship requires a large crew to run it, as well as guarding my trophies. That, and those
who pilot the Orbital Assault Fighters. So, no, I cannot spare them," answered Lockdown. "That's
why I'm contacting you. Is it possible for you to give me some Decepticons to assist?"

"That goes above the parameters of our deal, Lockdown," replied Shockwave with an annoyed tone.
"However, since the wrath of your employers is not something that I too desire, I can prepare a small
task force to aid you. In return, I would like to bring up something that I discovered just recently."

The Bounty Hunter frowned, but he complied with the request. "And what would that be?"

"We picked up an unusual energy signature originating from the United States. And by unusual, I
mean that it should no longer exist. The object that contained that signature was destroyed seven
Earth years ago," explained the one-optic 'Con. "Given the nature of your business on this planet, I
can only assume that you already know this and thus wish to clarify it."

There was a brief moment of silence, a thin thread of tension between them as they stared at one
another through the video screen. Finally, Lockdown gave a sinister chuckle. "I forget that you were
the brains behind most of Megatron's schemes," he said amusingly. "Yes, I do know about what
you're speaking of. However, my employers only recently told me about it and were quite adamant
that I also retrieve it. I do hope that this doesn't cause any problems between us," finished the
Bounty Hunter, even though there was a threat underneath that last part.

Not the least bothered, the Decepticon Scientist/Assassin replied: "Your employers' plans are aligned
with my own. As long as that remains, then there are no issues."

(Somewhere in Texas...)

It had been a few hours until the group of four humans and three Autobots were far enough that they
could stop and collect themselves. With nighttime slowly arriving, they took shelter at an abandoned
gas station. The humans and Rewind made themselves comfortable as best they could, with Evac
guarding outside and Optimus doing a patrol of the surrounding area.

Adam remained in the back of the gas station, sitting in an office. At the front, Cade was having an
argument with Tessa and Shane about their relationship. Wanting no part in hearing that stuff, the
young teen decided to examine the parts from one of the Rally Fighter Drones he recovered. Rewind
was also with him. Despite his age, Adam was very quick learner when it came to computers and
machines. As such, having lived with Rewind since he was seven, followed by travelling with him
and Evac for three years, Adam had a pretty good understanding of Cybertronian biology. Perhaps
not on the level of one of their medics and scientists, but greater than any other human. Thus it didn't
take Adam long enough to figure out the clues of these parts that were already spread out on a table,
while sitting in a chair with an open notebook that was filled with notes right next to him.

"It's like each piece is made from multiple smaller pieces, almost like nanobots. They work in sync
with one another so that the drone can change shape perfectly. That's why those two looked like
metallic particles when they transformed. Hell, it can be useful when avoiding taking damage,"
explained the young teen to Rewind as he examined what looked like the remains of one of the Rally
Fighter Drone's faceplates. "However, there are several flaws in it. They appear to have a preset
form, meaning that once they have an assigned biped or vehicle mode, the drone is stuck like that.
Their T-cogs have no scanners attached to them, meaning they can't scan any new alt-modes. Plus, if
an actual Cybertronian were to transform like that, they would leave their spark-chamber and other
vital components very dangerously exposed. And the particle metals are just as bad in regarding their
durability. While I'm not saying that they're weaker than the actual metals used to build normal
vehicles, ships and airplanes, this metal is not as strong as that of an actual Transformer."
"In other words: not impressive," said Rewind as he juggled some parts.

"It is, and it isn't," added Adam as he leaned back into his chair. "While I am impressed that a human could build something like this, but they are still following the stereotypical belief that all Cybertronians are just machines, having no regard or understanding of their actual biology. The only question I have is where did they get this kind of metal?" he wondered aloud as he noticed the odd texture of said material in his hands.

His musings were cut short when the door to the office opened with Cade walking in. The older male had a look on his face that said he was crossed between annoyed, frustration and exhaustion. "So this is where you were, Adam," said Cade as he walked up to the twelve-year-old.

Said teen nodded as he offered a spare chair to the single-parent. "Yeah, me and Rewind wanted to give you three some space while you discussed Tessa's relationship with that Shane guy."

Cade snorted in amusement. "Thanks. Even with guns blazing, alien robots and trained black ops people trying to kill me, it seems like I'm more focus on my fatherly duties than my survival."

Then the room entered a moment of silence, the only noise coming from Rewind as he shifted through the office, looking for anything useful. It was Adam who eventually broke it. "It's not your fault. Lucas' death wasn't your fault," he said sincerely.

A sad look began to form on Cade's face at the mention of his late friend. "I know, it was that uncle of yours who murdered him, no offense."

Adam let out a hollow chuckle. "Gotta admit, I never expected that asshole to be the Cemetery Wind Field Commander. Though, it does fit him."

"You two really seemed to hate each other," said Cade while studying the CW Dragonfly Mini-Drone he stole from Cemetery Wind during the raid on his ranch.

"It was mostly one-sided in the beginning. Like I said before: my mom's family wasn't a good one. The only person she cared about was her older brother, James and vice-versa. I don't know the full details of their history, but apparently, he got into a lot of trouble as a teenager with gang run-ins and Jail. Then he enlisted in the U.S Army and joined the Green Berets. After he was promoted to the rank of Master Sergeant, Savoy transferred to the CIA's Special Activities Division. That seemed to create a rift between them. And when I was born, he tried to get my mom to put me into foster care, saying I would drag her down and accused me of being a mistake. Eventually, my mom cut off all ties with him after that and legally changed her last name," explained Adam solemnly as he fiddled with his prosthetic arm. "We both assumed that he died on one of his classified missions with the CIA, guess we were both wrong."

Cade frowned at seeing how depressed the young teen was as his only living relative had tried to kill him. A part of him also wondered if Savoy was responsible for Adam's artificial limb, the thought made the father furious that someone would do that to a kid. Instead, Cade placed a comforting hand on Adam's left shoulder. "Well, for now, looks like you're stuck with us. I promise I'll make sure nothing happens to any of you," he vowed as his parental instincts kicked in.

"Yeah, and if that bastard tries to do anything, I'll blow him to pieces," added Rewind, having been silently listening the whole time.

His words seemed to have the desired effect as Adam offered them a small smile. "Thanks."

Cade nodded before letting out a yawn. "Now, I think the best thing to do now is for us to hit the
Evac said that Optimus will be back later, so we’ll be hitting the road in the morning,” he said as the two of them got up to join Shane and Tessa, with Rewind went out to join Evac on guard duty.

The next morning, the four humans woke up early. After getting themselves ready (or as ready as they could, seeing how they had no toothbrushes), they met the Autobots outside. Optimus, having regained his trademark colors, had just arrived in his new alt-mode: a 2014 Western Star 5700XE Phantom Sleeper Cab Semi-Truck. After Adam explained his findings from last night, the Prime had informed them that he had sent a world-wide message to any and all surviving Autobots that it was time to regroup. They would no longer remain scattered in hiding, now was the time to confront their foes before it was too late. With that said, Cade, Tessa and Shane boarded Optimus, while Adam and Rewind got inside Evac.

The two Autobots began driving down the long, empty road of the Texan highway. After a few hours, Cade spotted a blue 2011 Chevrolet Volt Concept approaching them from behind. Neither Optimus nor Evac seemed concerned, and the reason why was shown shortly as the wheels on the Volt had the Autobot insignias on them.

"Jolt," said Optimus as he greeted the Autobot Junior Medical Officer without using the comms.

"Optimus! The others are waiting up ahead off the road. Follow me!" said Jolt as he led them to the meeting place.

At the same time, three more vehicles were approaching from the opposite direction. At the front was a yellow 2014 Chevrolet Camaro Concept with black racing stripes, followed by a rosso corsa 2011 Ferrari 458 Italia Coupe, and finally a silver 2009 Chevrolet Corvette Stingray Centennial Concept. The three newcomers joined the three Autobots as they headed deeper into the desert land of Texas, concealed thanks to the large mountains.

On one said mountain was Arcee, who was on lookout duty when she spotted Jolt leading Optimus and Evac, followed by Bumblebee, Mirage and Sideswipe.

"It's him!" she shouted to the others.

Arcee’s yelling got an excited response from Hound who was standing on another nearby mountain. "Hell, yeah! He's back! Optimus is here!" shouted the Commando with enthusiasm as he fired one of his dual Ion Assault Rifles into the air.

Beside Arcee was Drift, who was kneeling next to the pink femme. Though his reaction was calmer than Hound's, his tone still carried the same amount of delight in it. "At last, hope has returned," said the Samurai 'Bot before transforming into a Cybertronian Attack Helicopter, with Arcee grabbing onto him as he flew down to the ground.

Driving from behind a mountain were Jazz, Ironhide, Ratchet, Wheeljack and Crosshairs (who had taken the alt-mode of a 2014 Chevrolet Corvette Stingray Z06 Coupe), with both the Heavy Weapons Specialist and Saboteur having regained their trademark colors. They all still had their old physical appearances, with Ironhide still carrying both of his Heavy Iron Rifles on his back.

Behind them were two more mechs in their alt-modes. One was a dark-red 2014 Dodge Challenger A/T Untamed Concept with black racing stripes, and the other was a white 2013 Nissan 370Z Nismo Police Cruiser with blue lines on the front and on the sides. When they transformed into their biped forms, the first one (who was 16-feet tall) looked almost identical to Bumblebee except for his helm and faceplates. He had a small pair of horns sticking out from each side of his helm. And instead of doorwings protruding from his back like Bumblebee and Mirage, he had a pair of wheels sticking out from behind his shoulders. The second 'Bot was around the same height as Jazz and
wore a visor and had swept-back audio horn receptors, but he had blunt digits instead of clawed ones and the doorwings protruding from his back made him look taller. He also was a bit bulkier around the arms, waist and leg sections of his frame, giving him a lean yet muscular build.

All the Autobots gathered around Optimus, who had transformed after letting his human passengers out. He was quickly joined by Evac and the others, as the mechs and femme greeted their leader.

"I'm so relieved to see you, Optimus!" exclaimed Wheeljack as he shook said mech's left servo.

"Glad to have you back with us, Prime," said Ironhide to his old friend.

"It's been too long, boss," added Sideswipe.

"Knew you weren't out of the game yet, Mr. Leader of the Free Galaxy. Never doubted ya for a second," said Crosshairs.

"We've been waiting for your return, Sensei," said Drift as he bowed his helm respectfully.

"Boo ya! We got the whole gang back together," said Hound as he smoked one of his cy-gars. The Commando then took notice of Evac and gave the young Junior Knight a friendly clap on the left shoulder. "Great to see that you made it too, Evac. Thought ya might have been offline," he joked.

Evac chuckled in return. "Not likely, old timer."

Optimus took in his comrades' appearances before spotting the two extra mechs. "Prowl, Cliffjumper," he said as the two named Autobots approached him.

Prowl, the 15-foot white and blue mech, saluted his CO. "It's good to see you again, sir."

"Likewise, old friend. Though I admit, I am surprised as you weren't at Autobot City," commented Optimus.

"I arrived on Earth a month ago and was almost taken out by Cemetery Wind until Cliffjumper saved me," replied the Autobot SiC and former Enforcer as he motioned at the dark-red horned mech.

"Yeah, found him pinned down somewhere in the southwest part of this county. Fortunately, we managed to link-up with 'Bee's group. An't that right, cuz?" asked Cliff as he bumped fists with his fellow Simfur Temple guardian, who let out some beeps and chirps in agreement.

Unfortunately, the happy reunion ended when Crosshairs spotted the humans. "So, who are the stowaways?!" he demanded as he pulled out one of his dual Ion Machine Pistols from subspace.

The Paratrooper's cry got responses from some of the others: Hound readied his X19 Scrapmaker Minigun, Ironhide powered-up his dual forearm-mounted Ion Pulse Cannons, Sideswipe deployed his dual Fusion Pulse Pistols, Jazz brought out his Crescent Shield Cannon, Mirage flipped out his dual forearm-mounted Cybertanium Curved Wrist-Blades, Prowl cocked his Neutron SMG and Cliffjumper morphed his left arm into his Solar Plasma Cannon. Needless to say, the humans were a bit intimidated by the numerous large weapons aimed at them. Only Rewind and Evac stood in their defense with their own weapons raised, while the remaining Autobots just watched.

Fortunately, Optimus stopped any possible fight. "Stand down, all of you!" he ordered. "These four humans risked their lives to save mine. I owe them a debt."

"But, Prime-" argued Ironhide, still not lowering his Ion Pulse Cannons.
"Down, Ironhide," said the Autobot Leader sternly. "We have no time for fights right now. There are more important things to do than that." His words appeared to have finally sunk in as the Autobots lowered their weapons. Hours later, as the sun had gone down and nighttime came, the band of fugitives took shelter in a nearby cave. A fire was lit to give the humans some warmth and light. As they crowded around it, the Autobots began to conversed among themselves.

"Has there been any word from the others?" asked Optimus.

"There've been a few weak transmissions, but nothing definite," answered Ratchet. "It's possible that they are taking shelter and cutting off all radio communications."

"Someone, the humans of Cemetery Wind or others, are blocking our transmissions, cutting us off from one another," added Prowl.

Optimus then turned to Wheeljack. "And what about those who went through the GroundBridge? Can we track their current location?"

"When I activated the GroundBridge, I set the coordinates to various places across the globe. Areas with small chances of human contact. But it was so sudden that I had no time to upload the coordinates before evacuating," explained Wheeljack. "Besides, even if we could, we still have no way of getting to them, not without transport."

"So far it's been the seventeen of us," commented Crosshairs with his arms crossed.

"On the run, with our afts in the air," added Hound.

Optimus looked on grimly. "And the Ark?" he asked. Said ship had been on his processor for a while, as it did have both the Hatchlings and his sparkmate onboard too.

Sadly, the news he got did very little to lighten the Autobot Leader's spark. "No response. The last one was from two Earth years ago. Leadfoot reported that they had made it to Mars and were resupplying. After that, nothing," reported Jazz.

There was a grim moment of silence after that, not a single Autobot or human speaking. It all seemed pretty hopeless right now. Fortunately, Prowl decided to break the silence. "While I too am concerned about the fates of our comrades, I believe it would be better if we focused our attention on other matters, such as the ones who are hunting us, and what their goal is."

The suggestion appeared to have worked as everyone had now shifted their attention to the new subject. "Prowl is right, we must put our attention to what we can do at the present," declared Optimus before continuing. "The Cybertronian Bounty Hunter, Lockdown, is working with the humans of Cemetery Wind in hunting us down."

"We figured that much when Arcee reported seeing him working with those slaggers three months ago," said Ironhide.

"The question remains however is why?" said Optimus.

That is when Cade spoke up. "Well, I can't give you an answer for that part. But Adam and I did some digging and we managed to rig this mini-drone I stole from Cemetery Wind when they attacked my ranch. And its got some concerning recorded videos saved in its memory card that I think you guys should probably see what it has."

A few minutes later, Cade was able to hook up the Dragonfly Mini-Drone to Adam's laptop that was being hooked up to some AV cables from Drift's secondary alt-mode (which was a 2013 Bugatti
Veyron 16.4 Grand Sport Vitesse Hardtop Convertible). A large holographic appeared on the mountain wall, and showed Cemetery Wind attacking multiple Cybertronians, both Autobots and Decepticons. The longest one was when they were in Hawaii, assaulting the Decepticon rebels under Starscream's command with assistance from Lockdown and Hangnail.

"I was wondering where 'Screamer flew off to ever since Chicago," commented Mirage as he watched Grindor, the grey-bluish Decepticon Close-Combat Specialist and Blackout's taller lookalike, get blown apart by CW-407A Light Attack Helicopters firing Hydra-70s at him.

The last recording was taken last year in Cuba. There, a 16-foot olive-drab and beige cameo pattern Autobot that had transformed from a regular BRDM-2 AASC (Amphibious-Armored-Scout-Car) of the Cuban Revolutionary Army, was under attack while trying to protect Cuban civilians. The whole time he was crying out: "Stop! I'm an Autobot! Argh! Autobot Flak! Cease firing! There are human civilians here! Stop!" before the smoke from the explosions covered the screen.

"Ah, poor Flak..." bemoaned Hound as he and the other Autobots lowered their helms in mourning for Flak and their other fallen Autobot comrades. Optimus moved his helm away, unable to watch anymore.

"After they kill them, these guys from Kinetic Solutions Incorporated come in. They tear them apart and take away the remains," explained Cade as he turned off the mini-drone. "They also created this mini-drone."

"Bunch of savages," snarled Hound.

"Agreed, Hound. To defiled one's remains like that is...barbaric," added Ratchet.

"And whatever they're doing, it probably has something to do with this," said Adam as he opened up his backpack and pulled out one of the parts from the two Rally Fighter Drones he grabbed. "I took this off a weird-looking drone that Rewind managed to kill. And it's completely different from what I've seen of Cybertronians so far."

"Can I see that?" asked Wheeljack with his right servo stretched out. The young teen complied and gave to him, allowing the Scientist/Inventor to scan it.

After a few seconds, Wheeljack gasped. "By Primus, this is Sentio-Metallico!"

"Sentio-what?" asked Shane.

"Sentio-Metallico, also known as 'Cyber-Matter' or 'living metal' as you would call it. It's basically what all Cybertronians are made out of, the metal that forms our frames. However, this appears to have been altered somehow, devoid of all inner parts such as our T-cogs and spark-chambers. Basically: a simple and bare version of Cyber-Matter," explained Wheeljack.

"You think that's why those humans are hunting us?" questioned Cliffjumper.

"If it is, then that's pretty sick," commented Jolt with a disgusted look written on his faceplates.

"Either way, we won't be able to find out if we don't do anything. Though I doubt we'll be able to avoid a battle," said Hound.

"You say it like it's a bad thing, Hound," said Ironhide.

"Maybe you don’t have to, if you had some human help," suggested Cade.
His daughter, who was sitting by her boyfriend, didn’t seem to like the idea. “Dad, you can’t possibly be thinking of helping them?”

“Sweetie, we’re also on the run too. If we want to have our lives back, we need to know why,” reasoned Cade.

"Optimus, you should know...its not just us they're hunting," said Arcee, catching the Prime's attention. The lone pink femme had been standing beside Bumblebee, the yellow mech having not said a single word the whole time. "Cemetery Wind are also killing any human civilian sympathizers or witnesses, no matter who they are, except sparing the ones who have a family member currently serving in the military," added Arcee as she placed a comforting right servo on Bumblebee's.

It took a moment for Optimus to figure out what the femme meant. But after seeing both the downtrodden look on 'Bee's faceplates and the grief in his optics, the Autobot Leader came to the terrifying conclusion. "No...not Sam and Mikaela."

"On the day after Autobot City was attacked," said Ironhide. "The bastards wanted them to give us up, but they never did."

Optimus clenched his servos with a restrained fury in his optics. It appears that witnessing the deaths of those he called comrades and hearing the brutal murder of two of his best human friends had made something snap inside him. Looking down at the oldest human present, Optimus asked: "Cade, do you know where this 'Kinetic Solutions Incorporated' is located?"

Said human noticed the snarl in the Prime's voice, and couldn't help but shiver slightly at how terrifying it sounded. Nevertheless, Cade managed to respond with: "KSI's main HQ is located in downtown Chicago. That's probably where they're taking them."

Optimus Prime nodded and then looked to the others. They all seemed to know what their leader was thinking and were merely waiting his word. "Autobots, I have made many mistakes, I know. I had thought that if we attacked the humans, we would merely prove their fears of us. Thus, I ordered us to flee and hide, but now the rules have changed. We shall go to Chicago and find out why they are doing this and put a stop to it. And when I find out who is responsible...he or she is going to die!"

"Slag, yes!" roared Ironhide as he slammed his fists together.

"Hoorah!" shouted Hound, with the others also yelling in approval.

Chapter End Notes

A cy-gar is the Cybertronian variant of a human cigar.

For Cliffjumper, I'm using his design from the Primeverse. In the Bayverse comics, Cliffjumper and Bumblebee were the guardians that were designated to protect the Simfur Temple that housed the AllSpark before the start of the war.

For Prowl, his design is mostly based off of what he looks like in the Bayverse comics, and he's the former head of the Security Force. The Security Force is the division that is charged with law-enforcement and sentry duties on Cybertron.

As for Flak, his death plays a significant role near the end of this story, but I'll let you
guys figure it out.

There you go! The Autobots are reunited and are ready for some revenge! Please leave a comment or two.
Discoveries, Raids and Sabotage

Chapter Notes

For those of you wondering of Wheelie's whereabouts, it will be revealed in this chapter. Along with that, Adam will deliver some VERY SERIOUS punishment for both Cemetery Wind and KSI that so many of you were hoping for. Anyway, enjoy and be sure to leave comments and reviews!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

(With the Autobots...)

With their sparks ignited with vengeful determination, the seventeen Autobots and their four human allies quickly began making their way towards Chicago. As they didn't need gas like normal human vehicles did, they were able to make splendid time driving from Texas to Illinois. They only had to stop for the humans, whether it was to use the bathroom, or to buy food and supplies.

Finally, after five days of non-stop driving, the convoy arrived at the outskirts of Chicago. Fortunately, they discovered an abandoned building located on the outskirts of the city. It was also big enough for all of them and it had enough space so the Autobots could transform into their biped forms. They wasted no time in securing their temporary safehouse, with Wheeljack setting up signal jammers to block any possible scans that might detect their Energon signatures. Cade and Adam, with the aid of Rewind, Evac and Wheeljack quickly setup a workshop that was fitted with various items they would need in order to infiltrate KSI.

While they were doing that, Shane and Tessa would be performing careful recon of said company's HQ with the aid of the Autobots. Said Cybertronians would make turns, switching between recon and guard duty. The only Autobot who would have to remain inside the safehouse was Optimus, as he would be recognized right away due to his trademark colors being a dead giveaway. After a day of preparation, the group met that night to discuss the plan.

"Okay, so we're completely hooked up, and Adam is going to begin hacking into their systems as soon as he can," began Cade.

"Can he even do that?" asked Shane, who was sitting beside Tessa. The humans had also setup a table to the side of a large corridor in the building, with the Autobots standing around them. "I mean no offense, but isn't he like what, ten?"

"Okay, first off, I'm right here," said Adam from his spot at the table. He had his laptop out and already on. The charger was plugged into a nearby surge protector, which also had various cables plugged into it. He also had the salvaged parts from the Rally Fighter Drones with him. "Second, I'm twelve." At that, Shane had the decency to look sheepish, with Cade having an amused look on his face as Evac and Rewind snickered together. "And third, I've already bypassed their firewalls and opened several of their data files."

That seemed to impress the Autobots, with Jazz letting out a low whistle. "Damn, kid. I don't think I've ever seen any of your kind work that fast."

"Trust me, Jazz, you haven't seen anything yet," commented Evac with a chuckle.
"Were you able to find anything connecting them to Cemetery Wind?" asked Prowl as the others gathered around.

The young teen shook his head. "No, it looks like everything related to Cemetery Wind is all sealed up tight and protected by several advanced computer locks. But I did find out that someone in the CIA is deliberately embezzling funds from Congress and transferring half of it to KSI. It's being held in a private computer that's connected to the company's bank account."

"If it's related to the CIA, then that someone is working with Cemetery Wind," said Ironhide.

"That's what we're thinking. Adam said that whoever is bridging Congress, the CIA and KSI, has the same protective firewall coding as the files," added Cade.

"And we might be able to learn a few more dirty secrets too," commented Adam.

"So the plan is to somehow get past these computer locks and gain access to those files," summarized Tessa.

"Basically," replied Adam.

" Doesn't sound like it will be easy from doing it here," commented Mirage.

"That's right, Mirage. Which is why I made this," said Adam as he placed a silver, sphere-shaped object on the table. "It's a device that I made from the supplies we got. Basically it acts like a receiver, a vanguard you might say, granting me even greater access into their systems. With it, I should be able to breakthrough those stubborn computer locks and see what they are hiding. The only problem is that it needs to be plugged into an outlet from inside the building."

"Meaning that one of you needs to sneak inside KSI," said Hound.

Cade took it from there. "And that's where I come in. We've already made two fake ID badges for me and Shane. That will get me inside and plant the device into the first outlet I find. I'll also be able to get some additional footage while I roam around."

"It's a very risky plan, but it's the only one that we have," said Optimus in gratitude to the human's bravery. "We'll begin tomorrow morning. I'll have Bumblebee escort you and Shane inside the facility, while the rest of us will remain outside on standby. For now, though, I propose we all get some recharge."

There were murmurs of agreement from both the Autobots and humans as they prepared to call it a day. The Autobots transformed into their alt-modes and switched on their emergency scanners before slipping into recharge. The humans headed for their sleeping bags they had recently bought, with Rewind transforming into his alt-mode while resting beside Adam.

(KSI HQ, the next day...)

Joshua Joyce was a genius, as he perceived himself. A hardworking genius that is. He had worked long and hard ever since he was young, and sacrificed many things to get where he was right now. As the CEO of KSI, one of the world's largest corporations in the world. His company was now at the head of the technological marketplace with cutting-edge technology that nobody has ever seen before. And it had only risen higher thanks to the mass of metallic particles in the jar he was holding in his right hand: 'Transformium', as he called it, Cybertronian metal that he and his company now control. And it was partially thanks to Cemetery Wind and their extermination of any Transformer they found.
Presently, the director of said CIA black ops unit, Harold Attinger, came marching into his large private office while completely passing through the secretary. With a sigh, the CEO of KSI put down the jar as Harold approached his desk. "We have a problem," began the CIA agent.

"You mean besides not having the Seed yet, which I'm still waiting for," said Joshua.

Attinger wasn't in the mood as he said with an empty tone: "Did you know that your systems were invaded yesterday?"

Joyce frowned, wondering how the man knew that. "Course I did, but we weren't able to trace the source as the hacker retreated quicker than we could follow. Why?"

"We have reason to believe that it was this young man," answered Attinger as he put a photo on Joshua's desk. It held an image of Adam Nova at the time when Savoy's men were holding him in Texas.

The CEO stared at the photo before giving Harold a look that he wasn't buying it. "You're shitting me," was all that Joshua said.

What the CW Director said next blew away Joyce's doubts: "After some research, we found that this kid, Adam Nova, hacked into the Pentagon in 2010. In just one hour, he filled every unclassified screens of shapes and sizes with a music video of the Space Jam theme." He then added: "He's currently twelve-years-old."

Now Joshua was surprised...and impressed. To be able to hack into the Pentagon at the age of eight would require remarkable skills with a computer. Hell, even if he had someone with such skills working for him, who knows what KSI could do. Joyce kept such thoughts to himself, though, as he asked the CIA agent: "Any reason why he would try something like that?"

"He and three other bystanders fled with Optimus Prime a few days ago from my men in Texas. One of them, an inventor by the last name of Yeager, stole one of your Dragonfly Mini-Drones. Most likely he found out that it came from here, and now they and the Autobots are trying to learn what we're up to," explained Attinger as he rubbed his forehead. Joshua, however, felt his stomach churn at the implication of that, the idea of what might happen if the Autobots discovered what was going on.

"The chances of them coming here are extremely high. We cannot let them learn of what's happening here, or we're screwed. Everything we worked for these past three years, gone," muttered Harold.

Joshua had a nasty feeling that Attinger was referring to something else, but the KSI CEO said nothing. He knew by now it was wise not to ask too many questions, especially when it involved trained killers. However, he did ask: "So, what do you want me to do?"

Harold glared hotly at him, causing Joyce to subconsciously flinch at the gaze. "If they come here, and they will, tell me immediately. Prime won't let these humans out of his sight. Get these people we and we get Prime. Get Prime and you get your Seed, understand?" instructed Attinger.

Joshua nodded but said nothing. By then, Harold had already stormed out of his office as if he was running from something.

(Around the same time with the Autobots...)

"Bumblebee just came back with Shane, Optimus," reported Arcee.

'Bee had just returned after taking Cade and Shane to the KSI HQ building. If everything had gone
well, then Cade would be inside no problem, and he would already had setup Adam's device at the same time. The rest of the group were currently in their alt-modes, minus Optimus who was on one knee. They were currently on the abandoned road that led from the abandoned building to the highway. Adam and Rewind were inside Wheeljack (whose alt-mode was a 2011 Mercedes-Benz E550 Sedan), with the young teen having his laptop open and a portable hard-drive plugged in. Though normally he would be with Evac, but Adam figured out that if a firefight broke out, he wanted the Junior Knight to have room to transform. Besides, Wheeljack was helpful in hacking into KSI's database.

"Did everything go according to plan?" asked Optimus.

"Sounds like it did. But something seemed to have ticked off 'Bee. He kept muttering and cursing about 'cheap knockoffs' and other less pleasant words," answered the pink femme as Bumblebee parked alongside the others. Tessa entered the Camaro soon after and sat beside her boyfriend.

"Well, at least Cade got my receiver in," commented Adam as he looked at his laptop with Rewind looking over the young teen's left shoulder. "I've successfully broke through those stubborn computer-locks and now have full access to the entire KSI system, along with all of their files. It looks like they've been melting down the frames of dead Autobots and Decepticons for Cyber-Matter in order to make their own man-made Transformer Drones," he explained grimly as he saw several images of different models. One model was a 16-foot lookalike of Bumblebee called 'Stinger' who transforms into a red and black 2013 Pagani Huayra Coupe. Its armor was a bit more angular and its insectoid-like battlemask looked to be permanently affixed to its faceplates. Adam kept searching as he finally reached his goal. "Now to find out who this mysterious third source is..." he muttered as he pressed the computer keys at a fast rate. A few minutes later, several windows came up on the screen. What they showed made the young teen's eyes widened and Rewind muttered: "Whoa...

Before Adam could announce his discovery, a screen appeared in front of him on Wheeljack's front windshield. In fact, a screen appeared on every Autobot's front windshield. The image was a live feed from Cade's phone, and what they saw was not pretty. It showed several humans wearing white HazMat suits, melting and tearing apart the helm of a black mech that had dozens of hanging sheets of metal protruding from both its cheek and chinplates, making it look like he had a beard and whiskers. Its remaining optic was empty, completely devoid of life. Behind it was a Double-Bladed Energon Axe that was leaning against the wall, no doubt next. Every Autobot knew who this mech was, and it was Optimus who confirmed it.

"THEY SLAUGHTERED JETFIRE?!!" roared the Prime as he slammed his right fist against the pavement, knocking over a street lamp. The Autobot Leader's blue optics were filled with barely contained rage as he loudly declared: "I'M GOING TO TEAR THEM APART!!!"

The other Autobots were in agreement. Every single one of them had their engines revving up like a mass of roars. The humans quickly buckled themselves in along with Rewind. Arcee activated her holoform driver, while Ratchet and Prowl brought their sirens to life. The two drove off first, soon followed by the rest of the Autobots. Even though the Tactician and Chief Medical Officer were using their alt-modes to have vehicles move to the side, the human drivers probably would've done so anyway, since all of the Autobots were driving at full throttle.

A minute after entering the major part of downtown Chicago, Adam reported: "I just hacked into their cameras. Security discovered Cade and he's being brought to an office several floors up."

While Optimus was too deep in his rage to respond, Prowl still had the processor to issue orders through the comms: "Wheeljack, I want you to remain outside with the humans. Drift, you and 'Bee will retrieve Cade. The rest of you will follow Prime's lead!"
"And while you guys are doing that, I'll be preparing my own surprise for them," said Adam, his voice filled with mischief.

Rewind, who had figured out what the young teen was planning also smiled mischievously. "You're going to make some noise?" he asked.

"Definitely going to make some noise," replied Adam.

The employees at KSI didn't even know what hit them. The moment the building came into the view, all the Autobots, minus Wheeljack (Bumblebee had let out Tessa and Shane out before joining the others), transformed and smashed through. Whether it was through the front glass doors or the walls, their entrance had the humans running for cover. Every one of them had their weapons out. Optimus took the lead with his Ion Blaster out, followed by Prowl and Ironhide. The Heavy Weapons Specialist slammed his left fist down onto the ground, creating a small shockwave that sent nearby humans flying. Crosshairs fired one of his dual Ion Machine Pistols into the air, startling the humans on the upper floors. Mirage and Sideswipe left large gashes on walls, pillars and other solid objects with their respective blades. Jolt flicked out his dual wrist-mounted Electro-Whips and short-circuiting any nearby electronic devices. A KSI PMC was about call for backup, only to be knocked out by a tranq-dart that was fired by Ratchet.

It didn't take them long to reach the lab. Optimus fired a warning shot from his Ion Blaster, destroying a part of the ceiling and scaring the humans. The engineers, scientists and technicians all ran screaming in terror. The other Autobots soon joined their leader, releasing their rage on the area.

"Clear out! All of you!" yelled Optimus as he fired his Ion Blaster again, this time destroying an empty desk and startling more humans. "Destroy the lab! Destroy it all!" he ordered his Autobots, and they were happy to comply.

"Science fair is over, meatbags!" shouted Hound as he fired one of his Ion Tactical Quad-Barrel Shotguns into the floor, just inches away from the fleeing humans. Crosshairs was behind him, shooting up all of the vehicles in the room. He took great pleasure in watching the human drivers jump out and run for their lives, while laughing madly.

"Destroy every single one of these abominations!" shouted Ratchet, cutting a half-finished drone with his right forearm-mounted Cybertanium Buzzsaw into multiple pieces, with Mirage joining him in cutting down every drone they could find.

Ironhide grabbed his Heavy Iron 2.0 Battle Rifle from his back and began firing Armor-Piercing rounds everywhere. "Leave nothing standing!" he roared as his servo-held weapon destroyed several cranes, tables, windows, drones and other objects.

"Timber!" cried out Sideswipe as he cut off the legs of a large scaffold tower, watching with glee as it fell with a loud crash. He then dragged his dual wrist-mounted Cybertanium Swords across the floor, cutting through anything in their path.

"Get lost, bitches!" yelled Jazz as he knocked aside several engineers, making one of them drop a donut he was eating. The Saboteur found several barrels containing several Cyber-Matter particles that haven't yet been used to build a drone. Raising his Crescent Shield Cannon, Jazz fired a single energy blast and destroyed them.

"Beat it!" shouted Jolt as he chased off a few scientists while flaying his Electro-Whips everywhere, destroying items and causing computer screens to explode from the large flow of electricity. A few KSI PMCs armed with Heckler & Koch G36C Assault Carbines attempted to shoot the blue mech, only to have Prowl use his left forearm-mounted Energon Riot Shield to send several shelves flying,
making the PMCs run for cover.

"Now this is more like it," said Evac as he fired his dual forearm-mounted Concussion Blasters at anything that came into his view.

"You can say that again, kid," replied Cliffjumper as he picked up a long pipe before throwing it at some large TV screens hanging from the wall. Arcee ran past him, chasing after humans with her dual wrist-mounted Energon Blades, while knocking over anything that got in her way.

The Autobots were utterly destroying the lab, leaving nothing standing. Furniture was toppled over, vaporized, riddled with bullet holes or cut in half. Glass covered majority of the floor, while sparks and smoke could be seen rising out of the machines. Amazingly, no humans were killed or critically injured (Except for the ones with dislocated or broken bones). Any drones that were in the lab at the time were destroyed and their parts were scattered all over the floor. The Cybertronians had no intention of leaving anything behind of this twisted mockery of life. The humans could only watched in stunned horror as all of their three years of hard-work was being laid to waste.

Drift and Bumblebee soon joined them, having rescued Cade and helped him retrieve Adam's receiver before escorting him out of the building. Immediately, Drift approached where Jetfire's helm and axe were before pulling out his dual Cybertanium Katanas. With two skilled swings from his prized weapons, the Samurai 'Bot freed the helm from its restraints. "We shall make sure that you are properly honored, elder one," said Drift softly as he picked up Jetfire's helm and subspacing it before grabbing the late Seeker's weapon.

'Bee made his own discovery as he fired his Solar Plasma Cannon. After destroying several walls, the young Scout found what looked like a small cage. Inside were two 1-foot Mini-Cons, one was a blue mech with red optics, wheeled-pedes and a damaged left arm. The other was a silver-grey mech with fiber-optic strands for 'hair', as well as missing his entire left leg and was currently using a cane to support himself. They appeared to have been banging on the glass walls of their cage for sometime.

"Wheelie! Brains!" exclaimed Bumblebee in shock at seeing the two ex-Decepticons.

"'Bee! Oh, thank Primus! I thought I never see a friendly 'Bot!" shouted Wheelie in glee as he waved his undamaged right arm.

"Get us out of this Frankenstein box!" demanded Brains as he banged on the glass with his cane.

Bumblebee wasted no time and tore open the top of the cage. Extending a servo out, the two Mini-Cons climbed up the offered palm. "I thought you guys were killed with Sam and Mikaela. If only had I known..." chirped 'Bee at feeling guilty for leaving the two Mini-Cons to suffer for three years.

"No apologies necessary, Big Yellow. We knew you didn't mean to," assured Wheelie.

"Now let's get back to the party! I wanna tear some shit up!" yelled Brains.

However, the 'party' came to an end when a human shouted, somehow over all the noises. "Stop!" yelled Joshua Joyce furiously as he walked up to the Autobots, followed by several KSI PMCs. At the back was Darcy Tirrel, Joshua's British geologist assistant and ex-girlfriend, who had both a worried and horrified look on her face as she took in the carnage. Joyce didn't even seem to flinch under the noise of Cybertronian weapons firing as he continued shouting, red in the face: "That's company property!"

Those words appeared to have angered Optimus even more. "They're not your PROPERTY!!" he
roared as he kicked down a nearby shelf that almost hit Joshua. The man didn't even react, standing where he was while completely composed. Pointing at the remains of the drones, Optimus continued, his tone was now a mix of both somber and fury. "They were my comrades, my friends...my family. And after Cemetery Wind and Lockdown murdered them, you desecrated their remains in order to make these things," he venomously hissed.

The other Autobots quickly stood beside their leader with their weapons still out. They all appeared ready to kill Joshua on the spot at any moment. From Bumblebee's left shoulder, the two Mini-Cons took this chance for some payback for all the torture they had suffered. "What's the matter, dickwad? Nothing to say to save your sorry ass?!" mocked Wheelie.

"Ain't so tough, now that the big guns are in your face, huh?" added Brains.

"Just give us the word, Optimus," growled Ironhide as he leveled his Heavy Iron 2.0 Battle Rifle at the human.

Hound did the same with his X19 Scrapmaker Minigun. "Going to make a big stain on the floor with you, baldy," threatened the Commando, as the other Autobots were ready to tear Joyce apart.

If Joshua was fazed, he didn't show it. Instead, he goaded them. "Go ahead, do it. Show us and the world your true colors."

"Please let us shoot him, Prime," said Crosshairs as he aimed one of his Ion Machine Pistols at the human's head.

Again, Joyce wasn't the least bit scared. He looked up at Optimus. "Why don't you tell your family that this," he said, spreading out his arms around the ruins of the lab, "is the spoils of war. Dead metal. Innovation-science. That is what's happening here-science."

"Is that what you think we are?! Science?!" hissed Arcee. Bumblebee stood beside her, leaning a servo on her right shoulder so that she didn't do anything reckless.

"Because if we don't do science here, then someone else will!" continued Joshua, ignoring the pink femme's cries. He then pointed at Optimus. "And you and the humans you've tricked won't stop us, because you can't stand in the way of technology!"

"We are not your technology!" roared Optimus as he fired his Ion Blaster into the air. The round struck the ceiling, causing cement and glass to fall. Joshua still stood his ground, continuing his unsentimental monologue.

"I broke the code. I own your genome," said the KSI CEO mockingly. "I broke your code, and now I own you...I can make you."

"Make them, my ass!!" yelled a voice that echoed off the walls. The sound caught everyone off-guard, trying to figure out where it was coming from. A few seconds later, every undamaged screen throughout the building blacked out. Then they showed the Autobot insignia on them, and wouldn't go away no matter what the humans tried to do.

(KSI Security Room)

After their 'meeting' with Cade Yeager, Harold Attinger retreated to the security room with James Savoy. The two watched from the cameras as the Autobots rampaged and destroy all three years of hard-work. Needless to say, Attinger wasn't going to let them get away with this.

"Contact all of our nearest QRF teams," ordered Harold. "And make sure that the Chicago Police
Department doesn't get involved. Things are already messy enough as it is with amateurs butting in."

"Got it," replied Savoy as he headed out to contact his team and any nearby CW units.

Attinger then pulled out a Cybertronian communicator out before turning it on. Putting it to his right ear, he said: "Prime is here, at KSI HQ in downtown Chicago, with a full team of Autobots. I'd hurry if I were you. We don't want to miss this opportunity to finally snag him."

"Hmph, I don't need you to tell me that, human. I'm already on my way. And I'm bringing backup, the ones that I can rely on," said Lockdown before cutting the link.

The Director of Cemetery Wind frowned, wondering what the Bounty Hunter meant by that. But his thoughts shifted when all the screens in the security room went black. The moment Harold saw the Autobot insignia a few seconds later, he knew that his day was going to get worse.

(Back with the Autobots...)

"You idiots didn't make anything like the Autobots. All the ones you have all made are fakes, frauds, imposters, cheap knockoffs, things that aren't worth being called 'second-rate'!" continued the voice as it came from every loudspeaker in the building.

It was Evac that recognized who the voice belonged to: "Adam..."

The young teen continued talking: "But I can see that my words of wisdom won't reach you, Joyce, seeing how all of that ego has filled your brain and is probably why your hair is gone." A few Autobots snickered at that remark, while Joshua merely bristled. "So, I like to shift your attention to a certain song that is perfect for this occasion: Sabotage by the Beastie Boys, enjoy."

The music began to play right after that. As it did, the Autobot insignia changed into Pac-Man. Facing him was a row of files, which he began to devour as the singing started.

"W-what's it doing?!" demanded Joshua as he lost his composure as he watched Pac-Man ate file after file. A knot began to form in his stomach as his technicians couldn't give him an answer. "Well then, stop it!" he demanded. Meanwhile, the Autobots just stood there, content with merely watching the human who had just recently stood up to them arrogantly, was now being reduced into this panic state.

Hound started tapping his left pede to the beat of the music, getting a look from all the Autobots, minus Optimus. "What? It's catchy," defended the Commando.

"Wheeljack, are you there?" asked Optimus through the comms.

"Optimus, it-it's amazing! Absolutely incredible at what young Adam is doing!" exclaimed the Scientist/Inventor in a tone of disbelief.

"What? What is he doing?" asked the Autobot Leader as he continued observing the frantically moving humans.

"He's deleting all of the KSI files on us!" replied Wheeljack. "To be more precise, Adam is both downloading and deleting simultaneously. Everything they've acquired so far on our biology, Cyber-Matter, drone manufacturing, past, present, and future projects. Everything that relates to their Cybertronian research and military weapons development, gone!"

The Autobots were all pleasantly surprised by that. More so is that a very young human such as Adam Nova could accomplish such a feat, but was also able to extract all of the information at the
same time. However, the important thing was that the young teen had put a very serious dent in the humans' plan for their own Transformer Drone army. And for Optimus Prime, it was better than anything he could've hoped for.

Subspacing his Ion Blaster, Optimus turned to the others. "Autobots, we're done here," he said before walking away, ignoring the looks from the humans that weren't being yelled at by Joyce, or the music that was still playing.

One by one, the other Autobots followed their leader, putting away their own weapons too. Some of them were a bit disappointed that they weren't going to shoot the bald-headed human. "Damn, and I've been itching to kill something," complained Hound.

"Same here, but seeing the look on his face is way better," chuckled Crosshairs as he watched Joshua sink into possible insanity.

The Mini-Cons shouted back at the KSI personnel from Bumblebee's shoulders as the Autobots casually walked out of the building, while completely ignoring the humans that moved out of their way. When they got outside, they were greeted by Wheeljack and Rewind, as well as their four human friends. Optimus looked at Cade and Adam before saying: "Thank you, you two have both brought some measure of justice to our fallen comrades. And I apologize for any trouble that may have happened to you, Cade."

Said man shrugged. "No big deal. But at least I got a very good look at the asshole who ordered my family to be killed," he said before explaining Attinger's name and his physical appearance as he hugged Tessa. The girl was clearly relieved that her father was alright, especially after learning he was in the same room with a rogue CIA agent who was also a trained killer.

"Optimus, I'm detecting several human vehicles approaching. Most likely Cemetery Wind QRF teams. I advised we leave now," said Prowl.

"Agreed. Autobots, roll out," ordered Optimus before transforming into his alt-mode. The other Autobots followed suit, with Cade, Tessa and Shane getting into Bumblebee, while Adam and Rewind got into Evac. Once everyone was ready, the Autobots took off as they headed for the closest exit out of Chicago. All the while, they never noticed the black and white 2007 Saleen S281E Police Cruiser parked three blocks away. Or the dark-blue General Atomics Avenger UAV flying above them.

Chapter End Notes

There you go, the Autobots have taken their revenge on KSI and are now fleeing Chicago. The next chapter will consist of awesome fighting, fast driving, chasing scenes, revealing secrets and another major plot twist!

Be sure to leave a review or comment.
Chasing, Captured, and Secrets Revealed

Chapter Notes

Now for the chase scene. I hope you all enjoy this chapter as much as I did writing it. In this chapter, a major plot twist will be revealed so be ready. Be sure to leave kudos or comments!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

(KSI HQ, Chicago)

Harold Attinger stormed through the KSI facility, searching for Joyce. Already, paramedics have arrived on the scene and helping anyone who was injured, while the Chicago Fire Department were attempting to put out any flames created in the attack. Cemetery Wind Operatives had also arrived, and were now securing the facility while working with KSI PMCs. Harold ignored all this, moving past others as he and Savoy searched for KSI's CEO. Eventually, they found Joshua on the skyway, who was currently talking to several of his technicians. With him were Darcy and Su Yueming, the head of KSI operations in China. Joyce had a very upset look on his face as he spoke with his employees.

The conversation stopped when they saw Attinger approach them, with James right on his heels. "The Autobots have just reached the city's limits. We need to pursue them immediately. How many drones can you-?"

"It's all gone," muttered Joshua as if he was stuck in a daze. "All of it, gone."

Harold frowned. He didn't know what Joyce was referring to, but he didn't like it. "'Gone'? What's gone?"

Joshua told him: "During the attack, they somehow accessed all of our files. The Autobots had erased everything that we had on the Transformers; all of the data we had accumulated in the past three years, gone. Even if we had more Transformium, without that data, we have no way of constructing more drones."

That bit of news nearly made Attinger lose it. All of that hard-work for the past three years, all of that data on the biology of Cybertronians, the knowledge that allowed KSI to build an army of their own man-made Transformer Drones for Cemetery Wind. Gone, all of it gone in a single day. However the CW Director had managed to keep his composure as he stood in front of Joyce. Once Joshua snapped out of his daze did Harold speak.

"Right now, several Transformers just did an unprovoked attack on a United States Defense Department contract company. This is now a Cemetery Wind operation, which is under my jurisdiction," he said to Joyce. "This is our final chance to capture Prime and get the Seed you wanted. You're indemnified, so respond!"

There was moment of silence, as everyone on the skywalk looked at both Joshua and Attinger. Eventually, Joyce turned to his technicians. "Which drones do we have fully available right now?"

Unprepared for the question, the lead technician didn't know what to say, but he managed to regain
his composure as he replied: "R-right now we have drones codenamed: Galvatron, Stinger and Junkheap currently available."

"Get them online immediately," ordered Joshua with Harold having a pleased look on his face. The two of them, followed by Savoy, the two girls and the technicians made their way to the Drone Command Center. Already, people were setting up screens and controls being handled. Three of the screens each showed a different vehicle. The first one was a light-grey and white 2014 Freightliner Argosy Cabover Truck, with the name 'Galvatron' at the bottom. The second screen showed Stinger in its alt-mode. The third and final screen showed a greenish-yellow and white 2014 Isuzu Giga FVZ-1400 Waste Disposal Truck, labeled 'Junkheap'. All three of them began taking shape before driving outside the facility.

"Let's show these alien terrorists what an 'upgrade' looks like," said Joshua, his previous anxiety forgotten.

(Decepticon Base)

"Soundwave, report," ordered Shockwave from where he stood. Surrounding the one-optic mech were several holographic screens in the air. Each one showed different images, including the Autobots driving down I-94 with Barricade pursuing them, Soundwave in the air, and now the three human-made drones from KSI that were on the same highway.

"Autobots are continuing on their current path. The drones from KSI are on the opposing lane. Calculating that they will collide shortly," reported Soundwave, whose voice was coming from the base's loudspeakers.

"Excellent, I have a ground team ready to move in. You shall continue your observations and inform me of the situation, assist only when necessary," ordered Shockwave before activating several more screens next to Barricade's. The first one showed Sideways in his alt-mode of a neon-silver and black 2008 Audi R8 4.2 Coupe. The second screen showed a white and red 2014 Audi TT Coupe with black lines over it, labeled as 'Fracture'. The next screen showed Dropkick in his alt-mode of a light-grey and blue 2008 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 Regular Cab Pickup Truck. The final screen had two vehicles, driving side by side. One was Swindle, whose alt-mode was a brownish-tan Cougar H MRAPV (Mine-Resistant-Ambushed-Protected-Vehicle). Next to him was Payload, in his alt-mode of a dark-blue Bulldog II Armored Truck.

"Ground team, pursue the Autobots. Fracture's in command. We must separate them from Prime, that's the objective. But don't engage them right away, let the human-made drones attack the Autobots first. We'll let them take the brunt of the damage. Vehicon teams from Delta, Gamma and Zeta units will reinforce you," explained the Decepticon Scientist/Assassin.

"Understood," replied Fracture.

(Meanwhile, on Interstate 94...)

The Autobots were speeding down the highway, trying to make as much distance between them and Chicago as they could. Ratchet and Prowl had taken the lead again, their alt-modes granting them some room as they zoomed by traffic. The others followed close behind, not risking the chance of being separated in the event their enemies attacked. Bumblebee and Evac, as the only ones with passengers, stayed mostly in the middle of the group.

Unfortunately, a KSI-owned MQ-9A Reaper UAV was flying above them, as well as Soundwave, though the Communications Officer made sure to stay out of the humans' scanners.
"Reaper has visual on sixteen targets," reported the operator manning the UAV.

The humans watched as the Autobots and their company-made drones were quickly approaching one another. When the two groups were 200 meters apart, the order was given. "Have Galvatron transform, but keep Stinger and Junkheap in vehicle mode for now," ordered Savoy.

"Copy that, initiating transformation," said the operator manning Galvatron as he pressed a few computer keys.

In response, Galvatron broke down into Transformium particles. The particles began flying in the air towards the opposite road. However, much to the humans' horror, Galvatron smashed aside several human-occupied vehicles upon transforming into its 30-foot biped form. The scary part was the way of how the drone moved looked like it was deliberate. The only two who didn't seem all too caring was Attinger and Savoy, as their only focus was on capturing Optimus.

"We are controlling this, right?" asked Joshua.

"Yes, mostly," responded the Galvatron operator, though it did do very little to ease Joyce's worries.

Getting back on focus, the operator had Galvatron deployed its dual back-mounted Six-Tubed Micro-Rocket Launchers before firing at the oncoming Autobots. By then, said Cybertronians took notice of the drones.

(Back with the Autobots...)

"Autobots, we have incoming!" warned Optimus.

"Where the slag did they come from?! And how come we didn't pick them?!" demanded Ironhide as he watched Galvatron preparing to fire again.

"These drones don't run on Energon, so our scanners couldn't detect them," explained Wheeljack.

"Nevertheless, they're in our way. What's the plan, Prime?" asked Jazz.

"It's too late to retreat, but we can't risk a prolonged fight with these drones," explained Optimus. "Ironhide, Hound, with me at the front. We're going to ram through them. Bumblebee, you and Evac will remain in the middle, protect the humans. Sideswipe, Mirage, Crosshairs and Drift, cover our rear. Jazz, Prowl, Jolt and Cliffjumper, the flanks. Ratchet, Arcee and Wheeljack, stay in the middle with 'Bee and Evac."

The Autobot Leader took the lead with Ironhide and Hound on both sides. The rest took their positions while avoiding MHEFRs (Micro-High-Explosive-Fragmentation-Rockets). Galvatron was forced to move out of the way as the Autobots drove by. The operator for Junkheap made the disposal truck transform, splitting it into three different drones. The first one was 21-feet tall, the second drone was 22-feet, and the third and final one was 20. The three of them tackled the nearest Autobot, which happened to be Ironhide. Said Heavy Weapons Specialist transformed and grappled with the second Junkheap drone, while the first and third were thrown back.

"Ironhide!" yelled out Optimus.

"Keep going, I'll catch up! It won't take me long in dealing with these frauds!" responded the black mech as he delivered a strong punch to the drone's faceplates.
From the main screen, Harold watched the current events. "Have Junkheap hold him. He's Prime's Heavy Weapons Specialist and one the strongest 'Bots, but get Galvatron and Stinger to pursue the others. Make them separate the other Autobots from Optimus," he ordered.

"Copy that, pursuing," said the operator manning Stinger, just as the two drones transformed and drove after the other Autobots.

(Back with Ironhide...)

He managed to power-up his dual forearm-mounted Ion Pulse Cannons just as the first and second Junkheap drones deployed their right forearm-mounted Automatic Fusion Shotguns. They fired first, releasing volleys of shrapnel at Ironhide. But the black mech brushed their shots off with ease. Leveling his Ion Pulse Cannons, Ironhide fired a single round from each cannon. The first round struck the second Junkheap drone in the helm, blowing it to pieces, while the other round struck the first one in the chestplates, offlining it. The third Junkheap drone lunged at Ironhide while he was distracted by the other two, but the Heavy Weapons Specialist's centuries of experience made him quick to counter the drone's charge. 'Hide quickly grabbed it by the shoulders and followed it up by slamming the drone down onto the ground hard, creating cracks in the concrete pavement. He finished it off by stomping on the drone's helm, smashing it into pieces. Once all three of the Junkheap drones were down, Ironhide transformed back into his alt-mode and drove off, hoping to catch up with the others.

(KSI Drone Command Center)

The operator manning Junkheap swore as the camera feed disconnected before slamming his fists against the controls. "We've lost Junkheap," he said grimly. Neither Joyce nor Attinger looked pleased.

(Back with the Autobots...)

The Autobots continued to drive down I-94, with Galvatron and Stinger still hot on their tail. Stinger fired two MHEFRs, nearly hitting Mirage and Crosshairs. "Why the slag are we running?! Let's just waste them here and now!" suggested Crosshairs.

"Too risky. For all we know, they could have other drones lying in wait. We should continue moving until we can lose them or take them out once were further away from Chicago, or out of the state most likely," said Prowl.

Suddenly, several sonic blasts hit the pavement near the moving Autobots, nearly causing some of them to drive off the road. "Jesus Christ, what the hell was that?!" exclaimed Shane as he was tossed back and forth in his seat.

"Sonic blasts! Very lethal!" explained Wheeljack as he dodged another of said projectiles. "Cybertronian-based technology. But the only one who uses sonic weaponry is-

Flying over the Autobots, a dark-blue General Atomics Avenger UAV swooped by. It then did a right turn and launched another barrage of sonic blasts down on the Autobots. The concussive blasts caused dust and gravel to rise up as the Autobots began to perform drastic maneuvers. Fortunately, they were able to either dodge or received minimal damage as they continued driving faster.

It was Crosshairs, though, who brought up what everyone was thinking: "If that really is Soundwave, then how the slag is he still online?! I thought 'Bee killed him in the Battle of Chicago
three years ago."

"We'll focus on it later! Right now, we need to keep moving before he gets another lock on us," ordered Optimus.

(KSI Drone Command Center)

The humans were watching this all from the live feed from the Reaper. To say they were confused was an understatement. "That's not one of ours, is it?" asked Joshua as he looked at Harold. The man seemed a bit befuddled by the UAV's sudden appearance. "Negative, sir. We'll try to figure out where it came from," said the Reaper operator.

"Sir, we're seeing several more vehicles nearby performing odd movements," reported the Stinger operator.

(Back with the Autobots...)

True enough, several vehicles that were driving on the overpass that the Autobots were about to pass, began to transform. The first one was Fracture, who quickly jumped down just as Optimus, Bumblebee, Evac and Prowl went through the overpass. Activating her dual Seismic Energy Dischargers mounted at the bottom of her pedes, the 16-foot Decepticon femme unleashed a powerful shockwave that ripped the ground apart. The human vehicles that were close by were sent flying, while several other drivers lost control and were either driven off the road or crashed into one another. The other Autobots were forced to do a sudden stop and quickly transformed. The only ones that managed to get through were Galvatron and Stinger, splitting into Transformium particles again and passing through the Autobots. Dropkick was the next to transform, powering up his right forearm-mounted Thermo Rocket Cannon, the 21-foot one-optic mech took aim at the KSI drones, but was stopped by Fracture.

"Don't concern yourself with them, Dropkick. Our targets are here," she said as she turned to face two other 'Cons. "Barricade, Sideways, go with Soundwave and assist him in capturing Optimus. The rest of us will deal with these Autobots."

"Copy that," responded Barricade as he and Sideways leaped over the other side of the overpass before transforming into their alt-modes and began pursuing the Autobot Leader.

"Now then," said Fracture as she turned her attention to the other Autobots. The nearby human civilians were already fleeing, some were running while others backed up and drove off in their vehicles, but she paid them no mind. "It's been awhile since I got to tear apart some Autobots," hissed the Decepticon femme. She, Dropkick, Swindle and Payload were joined by several black or grey-colored 2014 Triumph Thruxton 900 Motorcycles, 2014 Chevrolet Express G1500 Cargo Vans and 2011 Cadillac Ciel Concepts. The Vehicons transformed and powered-up their weapons.

This didn't deter the Autobots in the slightest. "Yeah, and its been three Earth years since we got to bust up some Decepticon punks!" yelled Jazz as he deployed his Crescent Shield Cannon, thus initiating the skirmish.

(KSI Drone Command Center)

"We have confirmed sightings of several Transformers engaging one another on I-94. Galvatron and Stinger are still in pursuit of Prime," reported the Reaper operator over the other voices.

Chaos, was the best word to describe what was happening in the room. They had already lost Junkheap during the chase, and Galvatron was possibly malfunctioning, already creating possible
civillian casualties. Now, several more Cybertronians had appeared and were engaging the Autobots in combat. Not including the sole one that was flying in the air, somewhere near their Reaper.

"We need emergency medical teams now. Possible many civillian casualties..." ordered the Reaper operator through the boom-mike on his headset. Nearby, Joshua had a very upset look on his face. He absolutely had no intention of getting innocent human civilians caught in the crossfire while under his watch, and now one of his own creations was causing more collateral damage than the aliens did. Talk about irony.

His mood worsened when Attinger stood beside him. "This is a small price to pay for what we are doing for both our country and the world," said the man as if he was trying to get Joyce to see the positiveness of this situation. "Innocent lives die everyday, Joshua, and you should know this by now. We can't let a few 'accidents' have us falter towards our goal."

For some reason, those words made Joshua even more angrier. He always had a gut feeling that the Cemetery Wind Director was not always who he said he was, or the reason for his actions. The way Harold had also brushed those deaths aside made Joyce feel sick. However, the CEO of KSI kept his displeasure of the CIA agent to himself, but then decided to ask a different question instead.

"Then what about those new Transformers that just appeared?" he demanded as he pointed at the main screen that showed the Autobots facing against the Decepticons and Vehicons, with several of the later already destroyed. "Are these the 'assets' you were talking about?" asked Joyce as a part of him was feeling very concerned about all of this, along with the fact that innocent civilians have gotten caught in the crossfire.

For a moment, Attinger hesitated. Like Joshua, he too was also surprised by the sudden arrival of the Decepticons, and wondered if these were the 'backup' that Lockdown had mentioned earlier. However, he managed to compose himself before replying: "No, but they are my asset's assets. You don't expect me or him to handle this alone?"

Joyce didn't seem fully convinced by that, but he let it go for now because there were more important things to focus on, such as when Galvatron decided to operate on its own, again.

"Shit! Misfire! Misfire!" shouted the Galvatron operator.

On the main screen, it showed Galvatron firing its dual Six-Tubed Micro-Rocket Launchers at Optimus and three other Autobots.

(Back with the Autobots...)

The twelve MHEFRs missed their targets as the four Autobots skillfully moved out of the way. The bad part was that the rockets had nearly struck several more pedestrian vehicles. One of them was a semi-truck that lost its connection to the trailer it was pulling. The trailer collapsed as it spilled its contents all across the street and directly in front of the Autobots. Unfortunately, while Prowl and Evac were able to hit the brakes, there was little to no time for both Optimus and Bumblebee to stop. Instead, they increased their speed.

"WHOA, WHOA!! 'BEE, WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?!!" yelled Cade at the top of his lungs as he, Tessa and Shane were all suddenly thrust out of the Scout and into the air as he transformed. Optimus did the same and both mechs jumped over the tipped trailer before going over the overpass too. As if in slow-motion, the Autobot Leader grabbed the three humans and shielding them from impact before quickly transforming back into his alt-mode and took off. Meanwhile, Bumblebee was hanging upside-down from the overpass by his pedes and had his Solar Plasma Cannon out before he took aim at Galvatron. Immediately, the yellow 'Bot fired as soon as the KSI
drone got closer. Galvatron, though, merely broke into Transformium particles again and avoided the plasma bolt as it slipped past Bumblebee before continuing its pursuit of Optimus. Clearly surprised, 'Bee retracted his new insectoid-like battlemask, showing his wide optics. However, he had little time to stay in shock as the sound of fighting from behind caught the young Autobot's attention.

Having caught up with them, Barricade and Sideways were engaged in a brawl with Prowl and Evac respectively. Stinger had already withdrawn, due to its human operator ordering it back to the KSI facility in Chicago. Adam and the three Mini-Cons took cover behind a support pillar under the overpass. Bumblebee ran over to help, but was quickly blocked by three 16-foot Delta-Class Vehicons.

Back with Prowl, the former CO of Cybertron's Security Force was engaging with his 16-foot former subordinate with his Energon Riot Shield, while Barricade was waving his dual wrist-mounted Cybertanium Gyro-Blades like flails. The Decepticon Scout had already managed to inflict several scratches on Prowl's armor and was slowly backing him into a corner.

"This isn't big enough for two former Enforcers, Autobot," hissed Barricade as he struck one of his melee weapons against Prowl's shield. "You're right, disgracer," replied said Autobot. In that moment, he swung his Energon Riot Shield outwards and smacked into Barricade's faceplates, stunning him. "Time for you to move out!" shouted Prowl as he pulled out his Neutron SMG from subspace. Barricade had no time to react as the former CO before the war fired several shots. Two struck below his chestplates as a third one tore off his right forearm, and the forth and final shot blew off a part of his faceplates and left optic. The 'Con was sent flying backwards, screaming in pain as he hit the concrete road, hard.

Suddenly, a photon projectile struck Prowl in the back just below his spark-chamber, and causing him to hiss out in pain as he collapsed to his knees before falling forward, clutching his wounds.

"Prowl!" shouted Evac as he dodged one of Sideways' punches. However, he too was also struck by a photon projectile, hitting him in the upper left leg. The young Junior Knight had no time to react as Sideways took this opening to deliver a powerful right hook to Evac's faceplates, sending the young 'Bot crashing.

From the overpass, Hangnail held his Photon Battle Rifle, with smoke coming out of the barrel. Lockdown's Second-in-Command took notice that Bumblebee was still dealing with the three Delta-Class Vehicons. Then he spotted Adam and the three Mini-Cons. He immediately jumped down and dashed towards the smaller beings, with his clawed servos reaching out to grab his target.

"RUN!" shouted Adam as he, Rewind, Wheelie and Brains tried to escape. But they weren't fast enough, though, as Hangnail fired a low-leveled shot from his weapon at the ground behind them. The blast from the explosion sent the four of them flying, with the three Mini-Cons falling on top of each other, while Adam fell to the ground away from them unconscious. His clothes were burnt a little and had a large gash on his right arm.

"Adam..." cried out Rewind and Evac weakly. They could only watch as the Cybertronian Mercenary rough picked up their human friend. Without even looking at the Autobots or the Decepticons, Hangnail transformed into his alt-mode and took off with the young human teen strapped inside. A few seconds later, Bumblebee had just destroyed the last Delta-Class Vehicon and was now shooting at both Sideways and an injured Barricade. The two 'Cons retreated as 'Bee continued firing at them. Once they were out of sight, the young mech ran over to where Evac and Prowl were.

"Are you guys okay?" asked Bumblebee through the radio.
"I'm fine, 'Bee. Go check on the Mini-Cons," ordered Prowl as his self-repair system had fixed up most of the damage done by Hangnail.

As the Scout went to do that, Prowl helped Evac up. The blue mech was about to transform and go after Hangnail when the Autobot SiC stopped him. "Wait, Evac-"

"Don't stop me, Prowl! That slagger took Adam, and I'm not letting him get away!" snared the Junior Knight.

Prowl wasn't deterred. "And what will you do if he uses the boy as a hostage? You'll be getting yourself killed and Adam will still be in his clutches," he explained. "Plus, look at your leg."

True enough, the leg that Hangnail shot had a large hole on it as sparks could be seen flying out with a bit of Energon dripping. "With that leg as it is, you won't be able to do anything until Ratchet or Jolt patches it up. Take the Mini-Cons and regroup with the others. Bumblebee and I will go after Hangnail," ordered Prowl.

Evac still looked like he wanted to argue but conceded to Prowl's suggestion. He then allowed the three Mini-Cons to climb onto his left shoulder before entering the compartment on his chestplates that he made for Rewind. The young Autobot then watched Bumblebee and Prowl transform and drove off. Evac eventually did the same, but drove in the opposite direction.

(Back with Optimus...)

Millennia of battles had given the Autobot Leader a clear sign that the Decepticons were trying to separate him from the others. He had no idea why they appeared now of all times, or if they were working with Cemetery Wind. Right now, though, Optimus' focus was escaping the pursuing drone and Soundwave, while at the same time protecting the three humans with him. Several times he had tried to contact the Autobots, only for his transmissions to be jammed, no doubt because of Soundwave.

Presently, Optimus was driving on a local road, where there were less humans. Galvatron was still on his tail and Soundwave was preparing for another strafing run. Galvatron fired two MHEFRs at Prime, at the same time that Soundwave fired more sonic projectiles. Both struck near Optimus and the road around him, causing the Autobot Leader to lose his balance and forcing him to transform. Luckily, Optimus was able to eject Cade, Tessa and Shane safely, letting them roll off the road and onto the grassy field. Summoning his battlemask, Optimus engaged Galvatron as the KSI drone tackled him. The two of them launched punch after punch at each other, making metal chip off of them. Galvatron's human operator was trying his best to keep up with Optimus, and surprisingly got some support from Soundwave, who transformed into his 16-foot biped form.

Soundwave's true form was exactly what he looked like before he scanned an Earth-based vehicle, back when he still had his satellite mode. That included the wing-like appendages protruding from his back, as well as a red visor covering his optics. The only key difference was his color was now a dark-blue with a mix of lighter-blue on it. The Decepticon Communications Officer and TiC unspaced his right forearm-mounted Sonic Cannon, powered it up and fired on Optimus.

Said mech managed to avoid some of the projectiles, but between melee combat with Galvatron and Soundwave's range attacks, Optimus was being pinned. Acting quickly, the Prime delivered a kick to Galvatron, making the KSI drone stumble backwards. Optimus then pulled out his Barrage Cannon and began unloading its ammunition of plutonium-depleted rounds on Soundwave immediately. The 'Con was forced to move to cover in order to avoid Optimus' shots, while using his tentacles to deflect some of them. The Autobot Leader was then attacked again by Galvatron, who used its right forearm-mounted Transformium Blade to slice off the barrel of Optimus' weapon. Subspacing his
damaged weapon, the Prime pulled out his Energon Battle-Axe and used it against the KSI drone's weapon. The two were evenly matched as their weapons clashed against one another. "You have no spark, *abomination*!" roared Optimus as he did a downward strike.

But Galvatron was faster. The KSI drone caught the weapon and brought it to its Vortex Grinder, located in the middle of the chassis. The moment the axe went through, the Vortex Grinder disintegrated it. But what happened next took both Optimus and Soundwave completely by surprise.

"And that is why I have no fear!" replied Galvatron with a hiss.

In those few seconds, both mechs' optics widened. That voice, they both knew *that* voice very well. Just hearing it made both of their processors freeze. However, that moment of hesitation left Optimus opened to an attack from behind, creating a small explosion on Optimus' back that sent him to his knees. Another shot sent the Prime flying forward before crashing onto the pavement, hard.

The shooter was none other than Lockdown, striding down the highway as he subspaced his helm-mounted sniper rifle. Floating behind him was the Knight's Ship. He paid no heed to Galvatron, who had transformed under orders from KSI and was pulling back. The Bounty Hunter gave a brief nod to Soundwave, who gave Lockdown one back in return before transforming and flying out of the vicinity.

Lockdown detected the three humans nearby, but he ignored them as he approached Optimus. Kneeling beside the Prime, the Bounty Hunter said: "I pity you, Optimus, for your allegiance with these humans. You see, the trouble with being loyal to a cause...is that it will *eventually* betray you."

"Who sent you here?" growled Optimus, trying to move but to no avail. The damage done to him by Galvatron and Soundwave, as well as Lockdown was too much.

"Where do you think you came from? Do you think you were born naturally, like the rest of our kind?" asked Lockdown sarcastically. Then, he delivered the truth: "You were *built*. And your Creators want you back."

The sound of a car engine caught their attention. Approaching them was Hangnail. From off the road, the three humans, hiding behind a rock, watched as he transformed, holding an unconscious Adam Nova in his left servo.

"Adam!" exclaimed Cade as he saw the young teen. He was about to run up and get him, but was tackled to the ground by Tessa and Shane, the two holding him back.

"Dad, stop! If you go out there, you'll be killed!" exclaimed Tessa. While she too was also distraught at seeing the unmoving form of Adam, she knew there was nothing they could do.

Meanwhile, Hangnail approached his leader. "Secondary target secured," he said to Lockdown as he showed Adam.

"What do you want with the boy?" demanded Optimus, angered at seeing the young teen being handled like some inanimate object.

"You didn't know, Optimus? I'd thought you have detected it sooner," said Lockdown as he took the boy from Hangnail. "Here, have a look for yourself," said the Bounty Hunter as he knelt closer to Optimus.

Lockdown indicated to the large gash on Adam's right arm. But to Optimus' surprise, instead of blood coming out, it was *Energon*. To further add to his surprise, the wound was quickly sewn up by *Cyber-Matter*. Optimus was speechless at what he saw. Not just that Adam had Energon in his
entire body, but the **speed** of that regeneration was only possible from a certain artifact that was destroyed in the Battle of Mission City seven Earth years ago.

"If you haven't figured it out from that, then I'll explain it to you, Prime," said Lockdown as he stood up with Adam still in his right servo. "Before it's destruction, the AllSpark had somehow transferred its energy, as well as the data it held, into a human female's womb. That energy mixed with the female's ovum, creating this...**thing,**" said the Bounty Hunter, indicating to the young teen. "A Human-Cybertronian hybrid with the AllSpark's power. And the Creators, they want to know how this came to be."

And with that, Lockdown summoned his dropship from the main vessel. Once it reached them, Lockdown and Hangnail, with Adam still in the former's grip, entered the ship. They then released a net that snagged Optimus. With Prime securely held, the dropship took off and headed back to the Knight's Ship.

A few minutes later, Bumblebee and Prowl arrived. They quickly transformed into their biped forms as their human allies joined them. All five of them watched as Lockdown's ship began moving towards Chicago. Prowl turned to the humans. "Where's Optimus?"

Cade pointed to the Knight's Ship. "Lockdown took him! And he's got Adam, too!"

The Autobot SiC immediately activated his comms. "Prowl to all Autobots, give me a report."

"**This is Ironhide. I'm with the others. Decepticons have already retreated. Minor wounds on our side. What happened?**" asked the Heavy Weapons Specialist.

"Lockdown has Optimus and the boy. We'll regroup back in Chicago. We're getting them both back."

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**Chapter End Notes**

For Dropkick, I'm using his design and alt-mode from the 2007 movie topline instead.

Because they don't have a spark, both the Vehicons and the drones made by KSI can be offlined by shooting at the helm (although the Vehicons are a bit more tougher).

I did want to show the reason of how Barricade got his new look in TLK.

Here is the full list of the types of Vehicons and their alt-modes:

- **Alpha-Class:** Eurofighter Typhoon Tranche 2
- **Gamma-Class:** 2014 Chevrolet Express G1500 Cargo Van
- **Epsilon-Class:** AH-1F Cobra Attack Helicopter
- **Zeta-Class:** 2014 Triumph Thruxton 900 Motorcycle
- **Delta-Class:** 2011 Cadillac Ciel Concept
- **Beta-Class:** T-72M1 MBT (Main-Battle-Tank)
For Soundwave, I'm using his design from the DLC Pack for the ROTF Video Game for Xbox 360/PS3/PC.

I bet you didn't expect THAT coming! Adam being half-Cybertronian.

Be sure to leave a review or comment!
Glenn Whitman (having already lost a lot of weight) had moved up in the world ever since the Battle of Mission City seven years ago. Once he had been nothing but a computer hacking genius, living under the same roof with his cousin, mother and grandmother. Now seven years later, he was here at the Pentagon, working alongside his childhood friend, the still beautiful-looking Maggie Madsen, as part of a anti-cyber team, working under the direct orders from John Keller, the United States Secretary of Defense. Both the work and the payment was good, with Glenn having finally being able to move out and buy his own house.

So imagine his surprise when he got an email from someone he hadn't heard from in three years. In it were several files attached, with all of them heavily-encrypted. Knowing that whatever his old friend had found was big, like internationally big. Glenn immediately headed off to find Maggie and Keller, his iPad tablet under his left arm. It wasn't that hard as a large group of people were heading towards the Pentagon's National Military Command Center. And whenever this many people go to, SecDef was there too.

True enough, Glenn was right. With Keller were several of his U.S Military advisers, among them was former Sector Seven agent, Tom Banachek, now a personal advisor for SecDef. Their focus was on several different-sized screens showing live images of a giant alien ship hovering over Chicago. Everyone else in the NMCC were running about, talking to one another or speaking through headphones. It was clear that they didn't know if they should make contact, attack, or just watch.

For a moment, Glenn forgot about the email, his eyes fixed on the large spaceship. "Whoa, is that a real UFO?" he muttered as he walked up next to Maggie.

"Yeah, and by looking at the design, it has to be Cybertronian," she replied.

"I believe Maggie's correct," said Keller as he shifted his attention from the screens to his four civilian advisers. "Can we confirm if it's hostile?"

"So far, the ship has made no hostile movement. But we do have the 170th Fighter Squadron from the Illinois Air National Guard's 183rd Fighter Wing already airborne if it tries to do anything," said Tom, with Keller nodding in approval.

"And what about Cemetery Wind, have we heard anything from them on this?" asked John while saying the name of the CIA black ops unit with distaste.

"No, Attinger is either completely ignoring our calls or we can't reach him," answered Banachek again.

The SecDef cursed under his breath. "Of course," he said before noticing Glenn and his iPad tablet. "Something you wish to share with us, Mr. Whitmann?"

Snapping out of his stupor, Glen got back on track. "I just got a massive email from an old buddy mine, Adam Nova. A master at computers and mechanics, and one of the best hackers on the planet. He just recently sent me this email, which has a huge massive number of files, with all of them heavily-encrypted," he explained as he handed his iPad tablet to Keller.
"Did you say 'Adam Nova'?' asked Tom as Keller and Maggie looked at the files. Glenn nodded in response.

"You know him, Tom?" asked John.

"Not personally, no. But I do know his mom," began Banachek, getting everyone's attention. "Sophia Nova was a member of Sector Seven's Advanced Research Division back in 1991. To be more precise: she was personally in charge of the research team that was studying the AllSpark at the Hoover Dam. It was thanks to her and her team that we were able to make greater leaps in understanding it and the Cybertronians. But she officially resigned in 2002 after discovering she was pregnant. We never inquired on who the father was, and it seemed that she didn't know either. Before Sector Seven was decommissioned after Mission City, we kept an eye on both her and her son, Adam, like we do with all of our former Sector Seven agents."

"Can we get in contact with her?" asked Keller as he handed back the iPad tablet back to Glenn, who he and Maggie began to discuss about the coding used on the encrypted files.

Tom sadly shook his head. "Unfortunately, that's impossible. Sophia was listed among the 30,129 civilians killed in the Battle of Chicago three years ago. I had thought at the time that her son was also among the dead, but it looks like I was wrong."

"That's around the same time when I stopped hearing from Adam too," added Glenn. "The whole hacker community was in an uproar about a possibility of him being killed."

"Sir," said Maggie, her Australian-accent catching their attention. "Some of the files here have the initials 'KSI' on them, while the majority of them have 'CW'."

"KSI as in 'Kinetic Solutions Incorporated'?" asked Glenn.

"It's a possibility," replied Maggie before her eyebrows knitted. "But what does 'CW' mean?"

"Cemetery Wind," answered Banachek. "I've been tracking Attinger ever since his black ops unit was formed. I also noticed that he's been going to Chicago for the past three years. And it's the same place were KSI's main HQ is located. Mister Secretary, there is no way this can be a coincidence."

John nodded. "You have a good point, Tom. But that makes this whole situation a lot more complicated," he said before staring back at one of the screens. The ship was now over the Chicago River. It was currently holding its position for right now, but there was no telling of when it might move. Keller then turned back to both his U.S Military and civilian advisers. "Continue updating me if anything changes. Tom, tell the White House Deputy Chief of Staff to meet with me immediately. Then get in contact KSI, I want to talk with their CEO. Maggie, I want you and Glenn to start decrypting those files immediately. I want to know what they're holding as soon as possible."

(KSI HQ)

A black 2007 Cadillac Escalade ESV and two 2011 Local Motors Rally Fighters were waiting for them outside the building. The moment Lockdown and Hangnail had captured Optimus, both Attinger and Savoy were already making preparations for the exchange. Harold entered the ESV while James got into one of the Rally Fighters. The ESV went in one direction while the two Rally Fighters went the other way.

"Savoy, prep the Pave Low and pickup the Seed from Lockdown. He's parking his ship at the river, so meet him en-route there," ordered Attinger through his cellphone.

"Copy that. What about you?" asked James as he watched the Bounty Hunter's giant ship hovering
The sound of jet engines overhead made Harold look up. Three different planes, a grey and red F-16C Fighting Falcon, a green and white F/A-18C Hornet, and a brown and tan cameo-pattern F-35B Lightning II flew pass them towards the Knight's Ship. The CW Director paid them no mind as he kept speaking through his cellphone: "Our men intercepted a call from the Pentagon to KSI. It has to be Keller. I'm ordering our men to block it while I deal with our liaison, try to buy us some time until we can smooth this over. Let me know the moment you get the Seed, and then we'll meet up with Joyce."

"Understood."

(The Knight's Ship)

The vessel that once carried the proud Knights of Cybertron was now a living nightmare. Cybertronian Mercenaries and 6-foot tall Cyber-Wolves were roaming the walkways and cells of various sizes were filled with different species from across the Cosmos. On one walkway was Lockdown, still holding onto Adam. Behind him was Hangnail, and in front of him was Optimus, who was restrained on a platform that was being pulled by dozens of Security Drones. The only part of his frame that Prime could move was his helm. He gazed at the interior of the ship with a look of both sadness and disgust.

Lockdown began to speak: "Do you remember this ship, Prime? Built for you Knights, the Great Crusaders who were chosen to explore the universe. Though you chose to remain on Cybertron when it left thousands of years ago. Well, I've commandeered it, using it as my personal prison."

As they continued moving, they passed by a large lower hangar bay underneath them. Down there were several of Lockdown's Mercenaries, guarding a single large ship. Optimus' optics widened as he recognized the vessel: "The Ark."

"Yes, the name for Omega Supreme's alt-mode," said Lockdown. "I found it on Mars a few months ago. I was able to snag it and its crew of Autobots before they could escape. However, getting inside it has been very difficult. Omega activated his security measures and has barred all access to anyone outside. Normally, I would just blast a hole in it, but the Creators were very adamant at keeping the Ark completely intact, along with its cargo. After all, inside are the last surviving twenty-one Hatchlings, and I'm pretty sure they would love to meet that beautiful sparkmate of yours."

Optimus growled at the threat the Bounty Hunter made towards Elita. One way or another, he will kill Lockdown for what he's done.

Said mech stopped to hand Adam over to Hangnail. "Put him in Sector 72. Then retrieve the Seed and meet me at the upper hangar bay. Once we give Cemetery Wind what they want, we're leaving this pathetic world," he ordered.

Hangnail appeared confused. "But, sir, aren't we going to give the Seed to Shockwave? Why give it to the humans?"

"It was Shockwave who personally wanted this. He most likely has some plan, not that it matters to me," replied Lockdown as he continued transporting Optimus. His SiC accepted and walked in a different direction with the still-unconscious human teen in his left servo.

Eventually, the Bounty Hunter and Optimus arrived in a large room. At the center was a platform that was connected by a single walkway as a pair of large rings were moving around the platform as Lockdown brought Optimus to it. There were multiple cages on the platform, with eight large ones.
Seven of them had massive Cybertronians imprisoned inside, while hanging upside down. Binders held their arms in place, preventing any chances of escape.

"Welcome to the Knight's Temenos, Optimus," said Lockdown as he spread his left arm out.

The Autobot Leader stared at the various cages. His optics locked onto the Cybertronians that were imprisoned. After a moment, he said in a despondent tone: "You have completely disgraced it."

"Hmph! So says the one who interacts with lesser beings," retorted Lockdown as he walked over to the only empty cage. "Now you can join your fellow rebels, fugitive scum. It has taken me centuries, but I have collected all of the Knights. Except for you," said the Bounty Hunter as he opened the cage. He then brought out his hook and roughly grabbed Optimus' left leg with it. With a single pull, Lockdown moved the Prime towards the cage, where a large robotic claw grabbed his left leg and hoisted Optimus up. Soon, he too was hanging upside down.

"The Creators want to sweep their chessboard clean. To do away with those who have disrupted the cosmic balance, like you and your pathetic band of Autobots," continued Lockdown.

"I am slave to no one," said Optimus defiantly.

Almost amused, Lockdown let out a snort before sealing the cage. "We all work for someone, Prime. You've just forgotten what you were meant to do," said the Bounty Hunter before walking away.

(Chicago River)

It had taken twenty minutes, but the Autobots managed to meet up on a drawbridge spanning over the river. Right above them was Lockdown's ship. Humans were already fleeing from the large vessel, as well as the giant alien robots that had just suddenly appeared. The only ones that didn't flee were Cade, Tessa and Shane. The three of them were staring at the massive spaceship in awe. The Autobots, however, had looks of nostalgia written on their faceplates.

"What happened to the Decepticons?" asked Prowl. The Autobot SiC was the only one who remained focused, and not on the ship.

"They fled a little bit before you contacted us. They left those Vehicons behind to cover their escape," answered Ironhide with a huff. He was really itching to bust up some 'Cons.

"It's been a very long time since I've seen a Cybertronian ship this big before," muttered Wheeljack. Despite having his battlemask on, the Scientist/Inventor still had a faraway look in his optics.

"Well, that ship has both Optimus and Adam imprisoned onboard. So that means we need to somehow get in and find them," commented Prowl. He then looked down at the humans. "You three will stay here while we go and find them."

"Not happening. I owe Optimus for saving my family back in Texas. But this time, I'm returning the favor. Plus, I ain't leaving Adam," said Cade sternly before making his way towards the ship. Tessa and Shane followed him because they were also determined to rescue both Adam and Optimus. Bumblebee helped them, carrying Tessa in his right servo while the two males held onto his back. The young Scout then fired his left forearm-mounted grappling hook, and reeled them up.

Prowl let out a sigh before saying: "Follow their lead. We get in, rescue Optimus and the boy, and get out," before he jumped onto the craft. Once he had a grip, Prowl began climbing.

Hound chewed on his cy-gar. "It's still a bad idea, but I'm all about bad ideas! Let's go!" declared the Commando and grabbed onto the ship's tower.
Seeing this, the other Autobots hurried to the ship and began climbing. As they did so, the Knight's Ship began to rise, moving away from the river and over the buildings and skyscrapers of Chicago.

It didn't take too long to reach the top of Lockdown's ship. The hull's flat surface made it easier for the Autobots and humans to walk on it, while searching for a way in. They found one: an opening that was big enough for all of them. After confirming there were no guards, the Autobots went down one by one, with 'Bee carrying the humans. What greeted them all were long rows of what appeared to be cells of some sort, with eerie sounds coming behind them. The lack of light added to the uneasiness the vessel's interior gave off.

"Feels like we've entered the Pit," mused Cliffjumper, referring to the Cybertronians' version of Hell as he looked around.

"It's rather unsettling," added Jolt. "And I don't know what are in those cells."

Hound pulled out one of his Ion Tactical Quad-Barrier Shotguns. "We're behind enemy line now, so keep your optics opened."

"Easy on the trigger, Hound. You too, Ironhide," ordered Prowl. "We have no idea what Lockdown has here, or how many of his Mercenaries he has onboard. Initiating a conflict isn't in our best interest right now."

"Prowl's right," added Drift in agreement as he pulled out one of his Cybertanium Katanas from his back. "The element of surprise is with us. Let's try using violence as a last resort."

Suddenly, a tentacle popped out from one of the cells in front of Drift. Some of the Autobots and humans let out shouts of surprise. The Master Swordsman immediately sliced off the tentacle before thrusting his Cybertanium Katana into the cell, stabbing the creature repeatedly. "Die! I'll kill you!" he shouted.

"Yeah, get it!" cheered Crosshairs.

"Well, there goes 'using violence as a last resort'," muttered Arcee as she crossed her arms.

"Is it dead?" asked Sideswipe as he retracted his dual wrist-mounted Cybertanium Swords.

"Yes, it isn't alive anymore," answered Drift as he was cleaning his weapon from the creature's blood.

Crosshairs did a short spin. "Well, we've looked. They're not here, let's go."

Cade seemed shocked by the Paratrooper's words. "'Go'? What do you mean 'go'?! We still have to find and rescue both Optimus and Adam!" he exclaimed.

"Oh yeah, why should I risk my spark? What's in it for me?" asked Crosshairs as he shoved a digit at Cade.

"What the hell do you mean by that?" asked Tessa, who was also angered at the Paratrooper's dismissal.

Suddenly, Ironhide wrapped his right servo around Crosshairs' neck. The Paratrooper let out a yelp as he was lifted off the ground. Next, Hound raised the Ion Tactical Quad-Barrier Shotgun he pulled out recently and aimed it at Crosshairs' faceplates. "Okay, you two. How about we use words here?" choked out the Paratrooper.
"What's in it for you, is that we don't offline you," growled Hound as he poked Crosshairs' faceplates with his weapon.

"And we aren't leaving this ship until we save both Optimus and the boy," said Ironhide threateningly before releasing Crosshairs.

The Paratrooper grunted as he massaged his neck, feeling some dented metal and wiring from the black mech's grip. "Okay, that's very persuasive. I can take that."

"Now that's done, let's focus on a way of finding them," said Jazz as he walked up to the three mechs. "Wheeljack, do you think you can try downloading a schematic of this vessel?"

Said mech shook his helm. "With a ship of this size, it would take me awhile just to map a third of it."

"CLANK!!"

A sound caught everyone's attention, with the Autobots having their respective weapons out as they scanned the area for where it came from. Bumblebee stood protectively in front of the humans, while the Mini-Cons stood next to Evac. "What was that?"

More of that same noise began to resonate from the walls. It sounded like pedes moving at a fast rate. And it was getting closer to group with every step, making everyone nervous as they searched for the source of the noise. When Mirage turned his helm towards Hound's direction, his optics widened. "Merda! Behind you, Hound!" shouted the Autobot Spymaster/Sniper.

Spinning around, the Commando let out a surprise yelp as a silver object tackled him to the ground. An orange blur flew past the others as they raised their weapons. Before they could attack, Tessa spoke up first.

"Is that a dog?"

Indeed, standing on Hound's chassis was a 6-foot Cyber-Bulldog. It had blue optics and engine pistons sticking out from its rear legs. Currently, the Cyber-Bulldog was happily licking Hound's faceplates.

"I don't believe it...its Steeljaw!" exclaimed Sideswipe as he recognized the Wreckers' Mascot/Tracker.

Hound, who was laughing as he was getting licked in the faceplates, gently grabbed Steeljaw. "Okay, okay! Get off me, ya ferocious beast," he chuckled as he put the Cyber-Bulldog on the ground before getting up. Steeljaw barked once, his glossa hanging out as he panted.

"Wasn't he on the Ark with the Wreckers?" questioned Arcee as she approached Steeljaw and began scratching him behind his audio receptors. This pleased the Cyber-Bulldog as he purred.

A groan caught their attention. Turning around, they saw an orange mech getting up. He was 5-feet tall and had four blunt digits on each servo. His blue optics spun as he got up before rubbing his helm. "Owww...I wish he would tell me when he was going to jump like that," muttered the mech before noticing the Autobots. "Sweet Primus! Cybertronians! Please tell me you're the friendly kind?"

"That depends on who's asking," replied Prowl as he approached the smaller mech, who did a salute.

"The name's Fixit, sir. Mini-Con crewmember aboard this ship, and the caretaker of all the artifacts
recovered during the Knight's Expedition. Or I was, until that Bounty Hunter and his Mercenaries took over," said the now-named mech.

"So this is the Knight's Ship they used to travel the cosmos," said Prowl, confirming his thoughts. "I thought it was very odd that Lockdown was somehow able to have a vessel of this size."

"Knights? Is that some kind of group?" asked Shane.

"The Knights of Cybertron, as they were called," began Ratchet, "were an order of Cybertronian warriors that served the Thirteen Primes. When the Dynasty fell, the Knights either left the order or wandered the universe for the Primes. When Sentinel Prime unified the warring clans of Cybertron centuries later, he and the ancient librarian and Optimus' caretaker, Alpha Trion, recreated the order. Optimus himself was also a member too. The Knights were given the mission to travel the cosmos, and find and collect artifacts left behind by the Dynasty on distant planets. This was their vessel they used to travel." The Chief Medical Officer then pointed to Evac. "Evac, here, was the youngest mech to be granted Knighthood before the war broke out."

"A few thousand years ago, we had received a distress signal from Cybertron. But when we arrived, we were attacked by hundreds of Cybertronian Mercenaries, led by Lockdown and a one-optic mech named Shockwave. They killed most of the crew, including the captain, and took over the ship. They others abandon ship, except for me, as by then, Lockdown had complete control of the Knight's Ship and I couldn't find any to escape," revealed Fixit.

"Shockwave? I had a feeling he had a servo in this," grumbled Ironhide.

"And you've been here this whole time?" Cade asked Fixit.

"Yes. Fortunately, I still have some control over some certain sections of this ship. I also keep a map that gives me present day positions of Lockdown's crew, so I know where and where not to go," explained the orange Mini-Con.

"What about Steeljaw here?" asked Cliffjumper as he pointed at the Cyber-Bulldog, who was currently greeting the three humans as he was very excited to meet new people. "How did you find him?"

"A few months ago, Lockdown and his crew captured a ship on a red-colored planet known as 'Mars'. But before they could get inside, the ship activated its emergency protocols and barred all access from the outside," explained Fixit. "The Cyber-Bulldog here got out of the ship before that, and managed to slip past Lockdown's Mercenaries. I happened to come across him when I was investigating, and we've been traveling together ever since, trying to find a way out."

"The Ark is here?!" exclaimed Arcee, who was shocked to learn that her two older sisters have been in enemy servos all this time.

"Calm down, Arcee. From what Fixit is saying, it sounds like they're still inside the Ark," said Jazz. "But this also complicates things too. Now we have to rescue Optimus, Adam, and the Ark."

"If you're planning on doing that, you all might want to hurry," commented Fixit. "I'm sure you all have been hearing that noise for sometime now. Its the ship's Dark-Matter Drives, preparing to take off."

"Take off, as in going into outer space?" asked Tessa. She had been wondering what that humming sound was for awhile. But now she knew. "So, you mean that this ship is about to leave Earth soon?"
"Yes, and Dark-Matter Drives are very powerful. Capable of going great distances," explained Fixit.

"Fixit," began Prowl, "you said that you have of a map of this entire ship and all current positions of Lockdown's Mercenaries onboard, right? Could you help us find our friends and the Ark?"

"Yes, as long as it means that I can get out of here," said Fixit. He then brought out a holographic map that showed a bird's eye view of the Knight's Ship. "Two new lifeforms were brought onboard recently. One was taken to the Knight's Temenos, where the last seven Knights are being held. The other was taken to the Relic Chamber. I can personally guide you there since it was my work station. The Ark is being held in the lower hangar bay, a few levels down from here."

"Optimus is probably being held at the Temenos, and Adam is in the Relic Chamber," explained Ratchet.

"The Relic Chamber will be difficult for large Cybertronians, such as yourselves. Its near the center of the ship, which is the most-heavily guarded," said Fixit. "However, the ship's ventilation system connects to the Primus Armory, located right next to the Relic Chamber. I can personally guide you there, but only Mini-Cons around my size or smaller can fit through."

"Then its decided," declared Prowl. "I'll take Jolt, Hound, Evac, Bumblebee, Drift and Crosshairs to find and rescue Optimus. Jazz, you and Ironhide, Sideswipe, Mirage, Ratchet, Arcee, Wheeljack, Cliffjumper and Steeljaw will go and free the Ark. The Mini-Cons and humans will rescue Adam."

However, Jolt brought up one major problem: "But its not like Lockdown will give us the time to find them, let alone get off this ship. We need to somehow find a way to keep him here so that all of us can escape."

"Actually," said Fixit, who was still looking at the holographic map. "If you take the path I sent you towards the Temenos, you'll pass the ship's anchors. If you can find a way to activate them from there, it might buy us some time."

"Leave that to me," said Crosshairs as he adjusted his goggles. "I know plenty of spaceships like this one to cause them some trouble."

Prowl nodded in agreement. "Okay then, let's get moving. We have a very tight schedule here, so let's get this done!"

"You got it, Prowler! Let's move, Autobots!" declared Jazz as he headed off to the right, followed by his group. The other two groups went into the opposite directions. They all have their assignments, and were determined to do whatever they had to do so they could all escape together.

(Upper Hangar Bay, The Knight's Ship)

Lockdown stood beside Hangnail and two of his Mercenaries standing behind them with Photon Battle Rifles at the ready. The Bounty Hunter as the MH-53J Pave Low III SpecOps Heavy-Lift Helicopter flew towards them. Several human-manned fighter jets were flying all over the city, most likely keeping an eye on the Cybertronian ship hovering over Chicago. Lockdown had given the order to his ship's gunners to hold their fire. He didn't feel like staying on this primitive planet a second longer, and getting into a massive firefight would do just that.

Hangnail looked at his leader. "I still can't believe that we're just giving these humans a Seed," he muttered.

"Believe me, I also find the idea revolting," said Lockdown in agreement. "But, a deal is a deal. And it's not like it will be in their hands for long."
The Pave Low had finally landed, its rotor blades spinning slowly as Savoy and four of his CW Operatives got out as soon as the helicopter's rear loading ramp came down. One of them had a wide black bag to put the Seed in. Giving the signal for his crew to stay back, Lockdown approached the humans. Without so much as a greeting, the Bounty Hunter placed the Seed down, with the oval-shaped object standing upwards.

"Is *that* the Seed?" questioned James as he looked at the device behind his aviator shades.

"Yes," answered Lockdown, watching with uncaring optics as the humans placed the Seed inside the bag. "As we agreed: One Seed, for one Prime. And I do advise handling it with extreme care. It can be quite...volatile."

The Bounty Hunter hid the amusement he felt when he detected several of the operatives' heart-rates speeding up. He then looked down at Savoy. "I trust your species will be responsible with it."

The Cemetery Wind Field Commander smirked, as if amused by what Lockdown had just said. "Don't worry about our species," he replied as he and his men began walking back towards the chopper with the Seed in hand.

The Bounty Hunter just snorted in disgust. He gave one last glance at the humans and the Pave Low. "Farewell, Earth," he said as he walked back inside with his crew in tow.

(Lower Hangar Bay, The Knight's Ship)

The lower part of the Knight's Ship held the smaller vessels used by Lockdown and his crew. This included the dropship, as well as multiple Orbital Assault Fighters. Some were heavily-modified with open cockpits, twin-mounted Single-Tubed Ion Rocket/Missile Launchers instead of the standard twin-mounted Energon Wave Cannons, and finally a rear-mounted open gunpod armed with twin-mounted Heavy Autocannons. In a separate part of the hangar was the *Ark*, also known as Omega Supreme. The largest vessel there, isolated from the others, it remained silent as the seven 19-foot Cybertronian Mercenaries in the hangar walked around, keeping an optic out in case if anything unexpected should happen.

And it did, even though they weren't prepared for it. In quick succession, two of the Mercs were cut down by Mirage's dual forearm-mounted Cybertanium Curved Wrist-Blades, as said Autobot deactivated his Electro-Disrupter cloak. Two more Mercs were offlined by Sideswipe, who impaled them through their spark-chambers with his dual wrist-mounted Cybertanium Swords before they could make a noise. The next two were dealt with by Jazz and Ironhide, by using nearby spare metal rods to fatally skewer their targets. The final Mercenary spotted them and tried to sound the alarm, but was quickly offlined when Cliffjumper rammed his left wrist-mounted Energon Blade through the mech's chestplates.

"All clear," said Jazz as he walked away from his offlined target. Coming through was the rest of the team, weapons out. The group of nine quickly made their way over to the *Ark*. Wheeljack approached the vessel's main doors, scanning the large Autobot's status.

"Hmm, looks like he's in emergency stasis lock. If I recall correctly, all large Cybertronians have a sensory scanner that when touched, would wake them up. Let's see..." muttered the mech as he pressed a few keys on the ship's lower hull.

Suddenly, the *Ark* began to shake in response, lights came on briefly before dimming a little. Soon the ancient Cybertronian's voice boomed across the lower hangar bay.

Omega Supreme as he brought down the main ramp for the Autobots to walk on. The group began making their way onto the Ark, while keeping their weapons raised.

The ship's interior was pitch-black, but that changed when a few lights came on, giving the Autobots a better view inside the Ark. The first thing they saw were the prone forms of Leadfoot, Roadbuster, Topspin, Elita, Chromia, Skids and Mudflap, all lying on the floor. They were unmoving and yet they had no damage on their frames. To the left side were twenty-one modified capsules, each one was holding a single Hatchling.

"'Mia!" exclaimed Ironhide as he ran over to his sparkmate. He gently picked her up, cradling her 18-foot frame to his chestplates. Arcee did the same as she put her right servo under Elita's helm. Steeljaw paddled over to Leadfoot, whining as he tried to wake his owner up.

Ratchet was with them immediately. He scanned all seven prone Autobots, taking in every bit of data he gathered as he checked over their forms. Wheeljack was heading towards the ship's cockpit, checking on the Ark's current power supply. Jazz, Mirage, Sideswipe and Cliffjumper remained near the entrance, keeping their optics open.

Three minutes later, Ratchet spoke: "They're all in emergency stasis lock. My recommendation would be to prop them against the wall for now. Then I can better tend to them once we're all at a safer location."

"What about the Hatchlings?" asked Jazz as he subspaced his Crescent Shield Cannon.

"They're also in emergency stasis lock," answered Ratchet as he checked the capsules. "I remember personally designing them. They recycle used-energy for emergency nourishment, thought it seems like Omega had used some of his own Energon reserves to keep the Hatchlings alive. We should leave them be for now."

"Speaking of Omega, I'm afraid he isn't going anywhere," said Wheeljack as he walked back to the group. "His efforts of keeping both Lockdown's crew out and keeping the Hatchlings alive have left him nearly depleted of Energon. Right now, he's on his emergency reserves, but not enough for him to take off."

It was then that Omega spoke: "Recommendation: transfer Energon from dropship." The Ark was currently situated so that the cockpit's front windshield was facing said vessel.

"Would that work?" asked Sideswipe as he looked at the smaller ship.

"It could. The dropship's Energon tanks will be enough for us to fly Omega out of here. Then I can land him somewhere safe to do actual repairs," answered Wheeljack.

"I saw some empty Energon Cubes near the Merc I offlined," added Cliffjumper.

"Okay. Cliff', help 'Jack with transferring the Energon over to Omega. Doc, stay here and look over the others. Arcee, try to find a way to open the hangar doors. Ironhide, Sideswipe, Mirage and I will remain on guard," ordered Jazz.

"Let's just hope that Prowl and his team are able to buy us sometime. Otherwise, none of us are getting off this ship alive," commented Ratchet as he began tending to their emergency stasis lock comrades.

(With Prowl's team...)

The group of seven had been walking down a straight path for sometime. During which they passed...
by dozens of cages that were all filled with different kinds of alien species. Some of them were less
than friendly as the Autobots kept moving forward. The good news was that besides encountering
Cleaner Drones, they had yet to run into any of Lockdown's Mercenaries. Either the Bounty Hunter
was convinced no one could invade his vessel, or he didn't had enough Mercs to guard the entire
ship at once. Either way, it was very convenient for them.

Currently, the group was standing before a very large mainframe, which was basically two walls
with red laser beams connecting them to one another diagonally. Crosshairs deduced that they were
transferring commands from the bridge to this section of the Knight's Ship. Said Paratrooper was
climbing between each wall, trying to find the gizmo that activated the anchors. The others were
down below, waiting for him.

"Anything yet, Crosshairs?" asked Hound as he watched the mech continue to climb up.

"Almost," replied Crosshairs as he dodged the lasers. While technically not dangerous, the
Paratrooper rather not take the chance. "The switch to the anchors is near here."

"Better hurry," commented Drift. "It sounds like the ship could take off into outer space at any
minute."

The Paratrooper kept on searching, until he reached for an exotic-looking piece that was in the center
with various wires converging towards it. With a simple pull, Crosshairs removed the piece from its
place, grinning madly as the machine began making noises. "Ha-ha! We're in business," he said.

Outside of the Knight's Ship, multiple anchors shot out towards a nearby skyscraper. They either
wrapped around or went through the windows on the top floors. In a few seconds, the anchors had
completely secured themselves to the building, holding the ship in place. The vessel jerked a little at
the sudden pull.

"Well, that did it. This ship won't be going anywhere for a while," said Crosshairs proudly as he
rejoined the others.

"Don't get too confident. Lockdown will surely know that something's wrong. Be ready for any
possible firefight," ordered Prowl as he cocked his Neutron SMG.

"Ha! That's good enough for me. I've been itching to bring some hurt on these Mercs," said Hound
as he pulled out one of his dual Ion Assault Rifles from subspace.

Prowl just shooked his helm at the Commando's battlelust before heading off in the direction of the
Knight's Temenos with the others following behind him.

(KSI HQ)

Joshua was very unhappy. In fact, he was pretty sure his veins were showing on top of his bald head
right now. Recently, the KSI clean-up crew he sent out to retrieve Junkheap's remains had just
returned after avoiding both the 123rd Engineer and the 33rd Military Police Battalions of the Illinois
Army National Guard's 404th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade that were deployed into the area
where the recent skirmish on I-94 happened at to recover the remains of offline Vehicons and
prevent them from being looted by nearby greedy civilians. Currently, Joyce was in the hangar bay,
along with dozens of other KSI personnel, such as mechanics and technicians who were checking on
both Galvatron and Stinger, with the former having just returned. Flight teams were also present,
preparing to move the completed drones onto cargo planes that were to be flown to China. Right
now, Joshua was with Gil Wembley, his chief technician, with Darcy standing behind him, while Su
was overlooking the loading of the drones onto the planes. The KSI CEO was currently ranting
about Galvatron and its less than stellar performance.

"B-but, Mr. Joyce-"

"But nothing, Wembley! Galvatron was a total failure, a complete and utter failure! And in this business, we don't do failures!" exclaimed Joshua, while pointing at said drone. "Along with it speaking, do you have any idea how much collateral damage it did?! And the number of injured civilian bystanders it caused?! How is that supposed to be 'commercial friendly', huh?! And it's a fucking miracle that nobody was killed!!"

It wasn't just the damage that caused by Galvatron, but also what the Nova kid did too. With all of their data on the Transformers erased, they couldn't create any new drones. As he told Attinger before, without that data, it didn't matter how much Transformium they had. It was all useless. Now, Joshua began to wonder if he shouldn't have even made this deal with Harold in the first place. It was costing almost half of his company millions of dollars and that one of his own creations had acted on its own, causing a large amount of unwanted damage. That, and the uneasiness he was feeling from Attinger was only increasing. And it wasn't just because the Director of Cemetery Wind had forced him to put his drones out onto the field before proper testing could be finished. Somehow, Joyce had put the dots together that perhaps it was Cemetery Wind, not the U.S Military and Congress, that were the ones funding him. If that were the case, and Joshua honestly hoped it wasn't, he could be behind bars for a long, long time.

When his phone rang, the CEO of KSI violently pulled it out of his pocket and growled out: "What?"

It was Attinger. "Don't sound so hostile, Joyce. We've struck gold."

That didn't do anything to soothe Joshua's anger. "Yeah, well that 'gold' better be able to deal with the situation I have right now!" he snapped, taking a moment to glare at Galvatron, with its computing systems being checked by a mechanic. The cabover truck appeared almost ominous for reasons he couldn't fathom. "Do you have any idea what this fiasco will cost me?!"

"Now, calm-"

"Don't you dare tell me to 'calm down', Attinger!" yelled Joshua, startling some of his nearby employees. "I've invested almost my entire company and three years of hard-work into this project. Then you ordered it into the field before proper testing could be finished, and I had to watch it all crash and burn in a single day! Do you even have the slightest idea of how many months this will set both me and my company back?! Millions of dollars, wasted!"

"Millions of dollars mean nothing now! We have the Seed, the Holy Grail, and soon the entire world will be in our hands! With this, millions of people will be the same as having a single penny," exclaimed Harold.

That somehow made Joyce calm down actually, his rage quickly forgotten. However, as he looked at the unmoving Galvatron that was still in its alt-mode, a knot began to form in his stomach. And it was slowly getting tighter. "So, you actually have the Seed now?" he asked tentatively.

"James is bringing it to me as we speak," answered Attinger. "I've been notified that you're moving your drones. Where are you heading?"

Joshua sighed. "I'm transferring the prototypes to my facility in China. It's the only place big enough for me to keep an eye on all of them."
That seemed to be alright with the CIA agent. "Good, we'll meet you there with the Seed. And don't worry, Joyce. Nothing, nobody, can stop this achievement we've made today."

As Harold ended the call, Joshua couldn't help but feel that this 'achievement' was going to bite him really hard in the ass.

(Decepticon Base)

"Blackout, what is the situation?" demanded Shockwave.

"The humans of Cemetery Wind have gained the Seed and they're heading towards the KSI facility in China," reported the Tracker.

"Just as I predicted. I'll have Stockade take his position. I will personally notify you when you may act," said Shockwave before he switched to a different comms frequency. "Fracture, what is your team's current status?"

"Barricade took too much damage from the skirmish. He'll need medical attention, perhaps an entire change to his frame. The rest are fully active," reported the Decepticon femme.

Shockwave nodded. "I'll have the GroundBridge up and bring him back here for Flatline to look at. I'm also sending the Constructions to reinforce you. Remain on standby for now until notified," he ordered before switching frequencies again. "Wreckage, when I give both you and Incinerator the word, I want the both of you to eliminate Cemetery Wind. We no longer have any need for them."

"With pleasure, Shockwave."

The one-optic mech then changed to another frequency. "Jetstorm, take Brawl with you to China to support Blackout and Stockade. I'm also sending Dreadwing, Divebomb, Overcast and a platoon of Vehicons with in order to give our ground troops close air support."

"Copy that," replied Jetstorm.

"Soundwave, send me confirmation of what you saw, and then prepare the virus that'll take over all of the drones under Cemetery Wind's command," ordered Shockwave through a different frequency.

"Understood. Preparing virus upload," replied the Communications Officer.

"What about us?" asked a voice from behind Shockwave.

Turning around, the Scientist/Assassin looked to see a full-repaired Starscream. With him were the remaining Seekers on the base: Thundercracker, Skywarp, Ramjet, Thrust, Dirge and Sunstorm. They were all fully-loaded and ready for action.

Shockwave's single optic narrowed. "Your unit shall eliminate any Chinese Military bases near the KSI facility. We cannot risk any interference from them."

The Decepticon Air Commander seemed pleased with that as he and his fellow Seekers began heading out from the underground base to carry out their task.

Shockwave shook his helm before directing his attention to a screen showing Lockdown's ship. He titled his helm when he saw several of the vessel's anchors shoot out. Millions of separate calculations ran through Shockwave's processor as he tried to deduce why such a thing has happened.
"Who fired the anchors?!!" roared Lockdown from the captain's chair. Lying around him were his Cyber-Wolves, growling in response to their master's fury. Below him were his crew as the Cybertronian Mercenaries were trying to give their leader an answer. Some were working on their respective consoles while others were issuing out orders to those of lower rank.

Just a few minutes ago, they had been preparing the ship's Dark-Matter Drives for interstellar launch. Lockdown was more than eager to leave this pathetic world, and return with his cargo and collect his bounty. But as fate would have it, an unforeseen event happened, the ship's anchors were all fired at once, and latched onto a nearby human skyscraper. Now the Knight's Ship was stuck, and they couldn't leave until those anchors were reeled back in or cut off.

A Mercenary approached the Bounty Hunter. "We don't know, sir! All controls to the anchors have been lost. Someone must've disabled the mainframe in that section of the ship," he reported.

Lockdown slammed both of his fists on both of the chair's armrests. This was clearly sabotage. Which meant that either a prisoner got loose or...the Autobots have come to rescue their leader. The Bounty Hunter activated his comms and switched to the private frequency used only by his crew. "Lockdown to all security forces, we have intruders onboard or a prisoner has gotten loose. We're on lockdown until they are either captured or terminated. Secure all sections of the Knight's Ship and check every cell. I also want some Orbital Assault Fighters dispatched to patrol the outside of the vessel, but do not engage the human military aircraft. Hangnail, take your best men and find them."

"Copy that, sir. I'm on it," replied Hangnail.

Lockdown looked down at his Cyber-Wolves. All of them were growling and salivating, just begging to be cut loose. Standing up, the Bounty Hunter pointed his left servo down the hallway. "Hunt them down!" he snarled in his native tongue, the only language his pets understood. With a howl, they took off in search of their prey.

Lockdown will not allow anyone to leave this ship alive. Intruder or otherwise.

Chapter End Notes

Yes, I'm very well aware that the 170th Fighter Squadron was deactivated in 2008, but for the sake of my story, it is still active.

For Fixit, I'm using his design from the 2015 RiD show.

I like to think that Omega Supreme is being voiced by James Earl Jones, the actor who did the voice of Darth Vader in the Star Wars film trilogy and Mufasa in the Lion King.

Next chapter is the second part of rescuing Optimus, Adam, the Ark and the intro of three new Autobots!

Be sure to leave a comment or review.
(Back with Jazz's team...)

Even from where they were standing, the Autobots could feel the brief shaking as the Knight's Ship came to a sudden halt. Several of the Orbital Assault Fighters in the lower hangar bay slid a bit, but the *Ark* and Lockdown's dropship managed to remain in place. Jazz frowned as his optics shuddered, scanning the area for any signs of hostiles. Ratchet was still examining their stasis-locked comrades and the Hatchlings. Meanwhile, nearly all of the Energon from the dropship had been taken and had been successfully transferred into Omega's tanks. Arcee was able to find the controls for the hangar doors and was ready to open them. The other Autobots were on guard, ready for anything.

"Looks like *signore* Prowl and his team were successful in stalling the ship," commented Mirage.

"Yeah, but that means that Lockdown's Mercenaries will be scrambling all over the ship. We need to be gone before they get here," said Jazz as he walked back inside the *Ark*. He saw Wheeljack in the cockpit, checking all of the systems. "What's the news, Wheeljack?"

"Omega's systems are all operational. I also managed to upload a jammer to block Lockdown's scanners. We can leave this place safely, Jazz," said Wheeljack happily.

Jazz nodded. "Everyone get on board! Arcee, open the hangar doors now!"

Sideswipe and Mirage were the first to board, followed by Cliffjumper. Ironhide stayed on lookout while Arcee activated the hangar doors. The circular hatch on the floor began to open, revealing the city of Chicago below. Wheeljack activated the engines, and the *Ark* came to life. The thrusters flared as Ironhide and Arcee boarded. Once the ramp folded itself and the doors were sealed shut as Omega Supreme floated, the Autobot Scientist/Inventor took control and had the ship moved out through the hangar doors. The *Ark* was now out of the Knight's Ship.

"Success, we've gotten out!" declared Wheeljack. The others cheered as Steeljaw barked in joy.

"Take that, ya slaggers!" declared Cliffjumper as he watched the larger vessel from one of the *Ark*'s ball turrets.

"Prowl, we've gotten the *Ark* out of the Knight's Ship, crew and all!" said Jazz through his comms unit, but there was no response from the other end, though. "Frag! Lockdown must have the ship shielded. Can't contact the others," said the Saboteur.

"I think we should focus on getting out of the city before we're spotted. Omega is invisible from scanners, but not from optics," said Ratchet as he finished his examination of the Hatchlings.

Arcee then asked: "Yeah, but where are we going to go? It's not like we can just find a safe spot to land automatically."

Suddenly, a loud *thump* from above caught their attention. The Autobots were startled as some brought out their respective weapons.

"What was that?" asked Ironhide.
No one answered, focusing their audio receptors towards the sound of something walking on the Ark's hull outside. Whatever it was, it was nearing the cockpit. Ironhide took the front, with Sideswipe beside him. They still had their weapons out incase the thing turned out to be hostile. A few seconds past and the noise stopped, and the Autobots thought whatever it was had disappeared. However, it was cut short when something appeared right in front of them, causing some of the Autobots to gasp in surprise as they saw what, or rather who it was.

(With Adam's rescue team...)

The group of three humans and two Mini-Cons were walking through the ship's ventilation system. They had done several turns while following Fixit. The orange mech had a holographic projection of the ship's layout in front of him, using it to guide him. "Not much farther now. Just two more turns and we'll reach the Primus Armory. From there, we can access the Relic Chamber."

"We might even be able to requisition some weapons that we can use. So long as it's our size," commented Rewind, who had his Photon Pulse Carbine out, ready for any possible attack.

"Alien weapons we can use? Yeah, I'm down with that," added Cade.

"Why does a robot spaceship even have a ventilation system?" asked Shane suddenly. "I mean, you guys don't need air, right?"

"True, but sometimes a large amount of space dust can gather inside the Knight's Ship after long periods of time. The space dust might clog up our systems and joints, so the ventilation system helps clear out the dust, so we don't have to worry about that," explained Fixit. "When Lockdown took over, it also served to make sure that his organic prisoners have air to breathe in."

Tessa looked at the smooth walls around them, feeling a bit intimidated by their size. "What was that noise back there? It sounded like something had hit the ship," she said.

"Most likely the Autobots were able to fire the ship's anchors. That will give us plenty of time to find your friends and escape before we enter space," answered Fixit. "However, the Mercenaries have most likely put the ship in lockdown. Protocol dictates that the designated captain has access to all doors, except for both the upper and lower hangar bays, and outside communications are blocked. Plus, any comms network that's not part of the Knight's Ship is jammed. Hence our mobility is greatly reduced."

"That means we need to move quickly and find Adam," said Cade.

A minute later, the group came upon a ventilation cover. "And here we are," said Fixit as he turned off his holographic map. He and Rewind worked together to move the ventilation cover without making too much noise. Once they placed the cover to the side, the group then walked out into a large room.

The room itself was a cove-like den of the ship. The middle of the den contained a circular platform that was built into the floor, and had six or seven swords stuck pointing down into the floor. They were about twice as big as the humans were. And to the left and to the right of those swords were standing figurines of Cybertronian Knights. They also had their own swords, pointing down into the floor as well, with their servos resting on the hilts. The figurines were cold and dead, staring away like statues did, and yet holding the attention of the three humans as they marveled at the sight. Wires and cables littered the floor, some were taller and thicker than any of them and required climbing over them as if they were fallen logs. Behind the platform sat a taller statue, this time with a wall of silver-colored steel gleaming behind it.
"Welcome to the Primus Armory," said Fixit to the three stunned humans and Rewind. "While the ship has many armories, this one was personally named after our god and creator, Primus. It was done so as this armory contains weapons for Cybertrons of all sizes, including Mini-Cons. This is to show that no matter what your function, alt-mode, or size, we are all equal in the optics of Primus and thus we fight as one."

"Amazing," said Tessa, but whether it was at Fixit's explanation or the armory itself, wasn't clear.

While Fixit was searching for the door that connected to the Relic Chamber as the others were still gazing at the armory, Cade approached the platform's center, his eyes looking at the sword standing in the center intently. Climbing on top of the pedestal, he reached out with his left arm slowly and grabbed it. When Cade tried to pull it out, it triggered the mechanism that was linked to the very workings in this room, causing the armory to instantly come to life around them. The Knight figurines began to split into different parts and began folding in on themselves before burying into the floor. The walls behind them also split before beginning to convert downwards as if a secret door had been released and exposed an inside chamber. The walls, no, cases, bore an array of servoheld weapons, consisting of different types of projectile or melee-based weapons that anyone could have imagined. Some were very large, while others were the size that a human could hold them.

"Holy shit..." muttered Cade as he stared at the many weapons now visible. A small sword-like dagger caught his attention. Cade gave the backpack he had to Tessa, who took it. Then he made his way over, and very carefully, used both hands to pick it up. Despite it being one of the smaller weapons, the dagger was still big enough that Cade held it as if it was a rifle. "This is frickin' wicked," he said to the others.

"Dad, you're not really going to try and use that thing, are you?" asked Tessa in an exasperated tone. She got no response as her father continued to examine the weapon.

A noise caught their attention. Turning around, they saw Fixit standing next to a large door that was opening. It revealed a short hallway that led to another room. "I found the Relic Chamber, let's get a move on and find Adam," said Fixit, before spotting the weapon in Cade's hands. "Oh, that's a Battle Rifle-Dagger. Good choice."

"Battle Rifle-Dagger?" asked Cade as Tessa, Shane and Rewind hurried through the door.

"Yeah, just press this button and..." began Fixit as he pressed a switch in the center of the guard. Suddenly, the dagger's blade split all the way down the middle. It stopped before it reached the dagger's guard and revealed what appeared to be a gun barrel in the middle of the two blades. "See, you can also use either end of the guard as the triggers to fire. Despite its size, this weapon fires energy rounds that blast a full-size Cybertronian's leg off with one or two shots. The blade also make it useful in melee-combat."

Cade, however, was even more in awe of the weapon than before. "Wicked," was he said as he and Fixit went to join up with the others in the Relic Chamber.

If the Primus Armory was able to amaze the humans, then the Relic Chamber left them completely frozen in awe. The chamber was larger than the armory and had rows of large shelves within, like bookcases found in a library. Each shelf was full of different items, all of them put into special containers. In front of each container were holographic Cybertronian letters, identifying what each item was, as well as where and when they were found and what they could do. The containers also gave off a glow that covered the items they held, illuminating them in a divine way. More figurine statues of Cybertronian Knights were also in the Relic Chamber, with each one on the ends of shelves and walls.
"Millennia of exploring the universe. Searching for remnants of our past. They're all gathered here," said Fixit as he spread his arms out.

"Unbelievable," muttered Shane as he looked at each item. Who knows what kind that each and everyone of these artifacts have. "But where do we begin to look?"

"If your friend, Adam, is here, then he would most likely is being held in the further shelves, where the most recent objects are placed," explained Fixit as he began walking down the shelves with the others quickly followed after him. As they moved, they saw that the items being held were less Cybertronian in origin, and instead to appeared to originate from other species. Some of them were less than pleasant to look at. They realized that these were trophies that Lockdown had acquired after he and his crew's takeover of the Knight's Ship.

Eventually, they reached the final row, which had fewer items on the shelves. Fixit walked up to a small keyboard next to the shelves, bringing up a holographic screen. He pressed a few keys, and the shelves began to shift. One of the higher ones moved the most, a part of it disconnecting from the shelf it was part of before hovering in the air. It then began to descend, revealing a container that was twice the size of a full-grown human. When it reached the bottom, the group gathered around and they saw Adam Nova inside it. The inside of the container was glowing blue, which was keeping the young boy afloat. Fixit pressed a few more keys, and the light disappeared as the container opened. With nothing to keep his body afloat, Adam fell forward, but was quickly caught by Tessa and Cade. Everyone gathered around the young teen's unmoving form. His skin was rather pale and he was shivering unconsciously. Shane took his coat off and put it around Adam in an effort to keep him warm.

Lights shinned from Fixit's optics as he scanned Adam. "His heart and pulse rates are normal. No signs of any internal or external injuries, but nothing fatal anyway. He's probably suffering from the container's cryo-stasis. Give him a few hours and he'll be fine, but hungry though," explained the orange Mini-Con.

Cade immediately put Adam on Shane's back, the young Irish-American placing his hands under the boy's legs. Adam's arms were draped around Shane's neck. "Okay, we got Adam. Lets get back to the others."

The group then began making their way back to the ventilation shaft. They had just walked through the small hallway when they came face-to-face with a patrol. It consisted of a Cleaner Drone with their dumb-looking faceplates, several spherical-shaped Security Drones, and finally, three 16-foot Cybertronian Mercenaries armed with Photon Battle Rifles. The two groups stared at one another in silence, both not expecting to see the other. It was Shane who broke the silence: "Oh, shite."

"Lockdown, we found-

One of the Mercenaries tried to contact his leader, but was shot in the chestplates by Rewind, who followed it up with a shot to his spark-chamber. The Security Drones quickly deployed their dual Mini-Ion LMGs and began firing at the group. The two remaining Mercs raised their weapons and joined in the firefight. The humans and Mini-Cons took cover behind a pedestal, while Cade and Rewind returned fire with their own weapons, taking down a dozen Security Drones in the process. Cade even managed to hit one of the Mercenaries in the right pede, forcing him to one knee. The mech was finished off with a round to the chestplates.

As Fixit was trying to avoid the bullets and photon rounds, his optics widened when he saw that the entrance to the ventilation shaft was closing. "Frag! The lockdown system is closing our exit!" he yelled to the others.
"Fixit, take Adam! Get moving, we'll cover you!" ordered Cade as he and Rewind continued shooting. The remaining Mercenary and Security Drones fired back. Dodging the bullets and photon bolts, the group made a dash towards the ventilation shaft, while Cade and Rewind covered them. However, a shot from the Merc made Shane lose his footing and fell, causing Tessa to trip over him. Rewind saw this, and since he couldn't stop running, he was forced to jump over them. He then bumped into Fixit, causing both Mini-Cons and Adam to fall into the ventilation shaft just as the cover came down completely, barring the humans from entering. Fortunately, Cade was able to kill the last Mercenary, as well as shooting down the remaining Security Drones. The Cleaner Drone, clearly seeing its comrades killed, ran off screaming.

"Shite, shite, shite!" cursed Shane as he and Tessa got back up before the two of them were currently banging on the solid metal wall that denied them entry into the ventilation shaft. But no matter what they did, they couldn't make it budge.

Fixit's voice, though, managed to make it through the cover. "Humans, listen to me! If you walk out of the armory's entrance and make a right, then make a left, you should see another ground-level entrance into the ventilation system," said the Mini-Con. "It should help you get to the Knight's Temenos."

Cade nodded before strapping the Battle Rifle-Dagger over his left shoulder with his side bag. "Okay, we'll meet you there. You two make sure to protect Adam!" he said as he took the lead with Tessa and Shane behind him. The Mini-Cons also began moving through the ventilation system with Fixit carrying Adam, while Rewind kept his Photon Pulse Carbine out.

(Back with Prowl's team...)

As Prowl had predicted, Lockdown had indeed send out patrols to survey that section of the Knight's Ship. The group had already run into three separate patrols. Fortunately, they were able to eliminate them before they could get word back to the Bounty Hunter. The moment their position was compromised, as Prowl believed, they would be swarmed by Mercenaries and Security Drones.

As they walked down a hallway, Prowl, who was at the front, turned to Drift. "Any world from the other groups?" asked the Autobot SiC.

The Samurai 'Bot shook his helm. "Nothing, and I can't get through to their comms either."

"Probably Lockdown's doing. He's jamming all our transmissions so that we can't communicate with one another," commented Hound from his spot in the back.

"In other words: we can't know how the others are doing," summarized Evac.

"We just need faith in them. That's all we can do," said Prowl as they continued walking.

Crosshairs snorted. "Yeah, faith. Like how we put our faith in the humans. Look where that got us." His snark comment earned him a smack on the helm from an aggravated Bumblebee. "Watch it, you!"

"Quiet," hissed Prowl, raising a servo. The group came to a halt to an observation deck that was overlooking a floor below them. On the lower floor was Hangnail and twelve Mercenaries. They were standing guard in front of a large circular door, with Hangnail currently discussing something with Lockdown over the comms.

The Autobots hid behind some cover as they looked at the Mercenaries that were present. Hound stared at the large door, then the guards. "With that many Mercs, it has to be the Knight's Temenos"
were the boss is being held," commented the Commando.

"Agreed. However, with that many Mercs, we won't be able to take them all out in time to prevent them from calling backup," said Prowl. He then looked at Jolt. "Do you think you can release an EMP blast that will short-circuit their transmitters long enough for us to deal with them?"

"I can, but I won't be able to move while doing so. And the range I can make won't be that great," replied the Autobot Junior Medic.

"Fine, the rest of us will engage them, but wait for my signal," ordered Prowl as he looked down at Hangnail, waiting for Lockdown's SiC to continue his conversation.

"A team of twelve is with me in front of the Temenos. If by some chance the Autobots do get here, we'll be ready for them," said Hangnail.

"Good, we can't risk losing Prime. So far we aren't having any luck in deactivating the anchors, so I've dispatched two separate teams to remove them manually. By my calculations, we'll be leaving in a few minutes. Contact me if anything important occurs," ordered Lockdown.

"Understood, sir. Hangnail, out," said the Mercenary as he ended his transmission. But seconds later, a powerful EMP blast struck him and his team, disrupting their processors for a moment and leaving them stunned.

"NOW!!" yelled Prowl as he opened fire with his Neutron SMG, managing to injure a Merc in the helm before blowing away his spark-chamber. Hound followed suit with his X19 Scrapmaker Minigun, mowing down two more Mercs. The rest of the Autobots followed suit and unleashed their weapons. By then, Hangnail and the remaining Mercenaries had recovered and began firing back.

"Lockdown, we're being engaged by Autobots! Requesting backup!" Hangnail shouted into his comms unit, only to get static. "Slag, that EMP blast must've disabled the comms," he cursed as he fired his Photon Battle Rifle. Turning towards the other Mercenaries, he ordered: "Cover me while I try to reestablish contact with Lockdown!" As he moved away from the Temenos' door and somewhere safer, he knew that if he could fix his comms unit in time, he'll be able to call in reinforcements.

"Oh no, you don't!" snarled Evac as he charged towards Hangnail, firing his dual forearm-mounted Concussion Blasters. The blue mech had spotted the Mercenary trying to retreat and immediately came upon him. Hangnail tried to fire his weapon, but Evac kicked it out of his servos before delivering a hard punch to Hangnail's faceplates, chipping some metal off too.

The Mercenary spat out some Energon and glared at Evac. "The last two times, I didn't have the time to waste you," he said as he brought out a pair of dual wrist-mounted Energon Blades. "But this time, I'm going to offline you for good!"

"Just try it, you piece of scrap," retorted Evac as he fired again.

Hangnail dodged the bolts and charged Evac. The young Junior Knight delivered a right punch, but the Mercenary avoided it before driving one of his Energon Blades into Evac's left knee. Grunting in pain, Evac grabbed Hangnail's right arm and twisted it, causing the Merc to roar in pain before he did a spin that freed his arm before kicking Evac in the faceplates. The blue mech stumbled backwards a bit from the impact, allowing Hangnail to charge him and try to ram one of his Energon Blades through Evac's chestplates. But the young Autobot dodged the attempt and swung another fist at Hangnail. This time, he struck the Mercenary and delivered several more punches.
Hangnail became disoriented as he felt each blow, and yet the Mercenary knew he had to counter somehow. So when Evac went in to deliver another punch, Hangnail stepped to the side before grabbing Evac's left arm. Gripping it hard enough that it left dents, he followed it up by throwing the younger mech into the wall, earning a loud grunt of pain from the Autobot as he landed on his aft. Evac's processor was disoriented from the sudden action, giving Hangnail an opening to end the Junior Knight's life.

As his processor was getting back in order, Evac saw the Mercenary rushing at him, Energon Blades posed to strike. Thinking quickly, Evac spotted Hangnail's discarded Photon Battle Rifle beside him. Picking the weapon up, the blue mech aimed at the Mercenary just as he was upon him. Aiming straight at Hangnail's chestplates, Evac fired three shots at point-blank range. The Mercenary gasped in shock as he felt photon bolts melt through his armor. Stumbling backwards, Hangnail tried to cover his wounds as his pain receptors were flaring like never before. That gave Evac the opening he needed. He fired two more shots, the first one hit his spark-chamber and the second one destroyed Hangnail's entire helm, causing Energon to pour out like a fountain as the lifeless frame fell backwards to the ground, ending the fight.

Evac let out a long sigh as he stared at Hangnail's offlined form before dropping his opponent's weapon. He almost collapsed from exhaustion, but was thankfully grabbed by Prowl, who had his right servo gently holding Evac's left arm.

"You okay, Evac?" asked the Autobot Tactician.

"I'm good," replied the blue mech as he got back up. The two regrouped with the others, who already had disposed of the remaining Mercenaries. Currently, Drift was using his Cybertanium Katanas to forcefully open the door.

"Jolt, check on Evac," ordered Prowl.

The Junior Medic nodded as he ran over to Evac. While he was scanning the Junior Knight's condition, Prowl looked at Drift. "Well?"

"I almost got it...there!" grunted Drift as he finally opened the door.

"Big boy coming through! Move, move!" shouted Hound as he took point, followed by Drift, Prowl, Bumblebee, Jolt and Evac, while Crosshairs covered the rear as the group entered the Temenos. The first thing they saw were the several cages in center of the room.

"Lots of cages in here," commented Drift as he stared at them from a distance.

"Oh yeah, creepy critters in here," added Hound.

"This was a sacred chamber once. It only makes sense that Lockdown would use it to hold his most prized captures," said Prowl as he looked around.

"Yeah, well, I don't want to even know what's inside them," muttered Crosshairs as he looked at the larger ones.

"A lot of the big ones are in stasis," mused Jolt as he stared at the large Cybertronians.

Movement from inside a smaller cage caught Hound's attention. "Huh, what's this? It an't Cybertronian," he muttered as he got closer.

"Ah, Hound. I don't think that's a good idea," advised Crosshairs.
The Commando let out a snort as he lowered his helm to see the creature. It was a small, white-skinned alien with four pincer-like legs that converged into a single body. In the center of said body was mouth with rows of sharp teeth. Shuddering, Hound said: "Oh, that's just festering ugliness."

As if understanding of what the Commando had just said, the alien spat out a glob of green goo right into the mech's faceplates. Hound let out a cry of surprise, startling the other Autobots. "Ah, I'm hit! I'm dying!" he cried out as he rolled on the floor. "I think it's acid!" But after realizing that nothing was happening, Hound looked at the goo before reeling in disgust. "Ugh, it's just shizzle."

"That's nasty," said Brains as he waved his right servo, blocking his enstril (the nose) from the smell. He and Wheelie had crawled out of Evac's compartment on his chestplates after the fighting was done.

"I hope that's not contagious," commented Crosshairs.

After wiping the goo off, Hound glared at the creature. "I gotta hurt ya now. You're just too disturbing to live," he said as he brought out one of his Ion Tactical Quad-Barrel Shotguns. "Take this, bitch!" And fired a single four-round shot that hit the alien dead center. "Boom! You're dead."

"If you're all done playing around, let's look for Optimus. He's got to be in one of these cages," said Prowl.

"Prowl!" shouted a voice, catching said mech's audio receptors.

"Prime!" shouted Prowl as he followed the voice. He soon found Optimus' cage, with said mech dangling upside down.

"He's alive!" roared Hound as he got up from the floor. The others followed behind him.

"Hang on, boss! We're coming!" shouted Crosshairs as Drift forced the cage door open.

Optimus watched with relief as his comrades were okay. But he soon got to the issue at hand: "The Ark is here! We need to free both it and Adam."

"We know, sir, and we already have a team on it. Drift, cut those restraints down," ordered Prowl.

"Hold on, Sensei," said Drift as he began cutting the restraints.

"We can escape from here! The arms of the Knight's Ship can detached. It's a separate vessel," explained the Autobot Leader as he got down.

"Where's the cockpit? Left or right?" asked Hound as he picked up Optimus' discarded weapons.

"To the right!" answered Optimus.

"Got it, boss," said Hound as he ran towards the cockpit.

Suddenly, the sound of small footsteps caught the Autobots' attention. Running inside the Temenos were Rewind and Fixit, with the latter carrying Adam on his back.

"Adam!" shouted Evac as he bent down and gently took the teen from the orange Mini-Con.

Optimus looked at Fixit. "Who's this?" he asked Prowl.

"His name is Fixit. He's a survivor of the ship's original crew. He helped us find you, Adam and the Ark," explained Prowl.
"Hey, where are the three humans that were with ya?" asked Crosshairs when he didn't see Cade, Tessa and Shane.

"We got separated when one of Lockdown's patrols found us. Fixit directed them to another ventilation shaft, but apparently they made a wrong turn somewhere and are now heading towards the anchors," reported Rewind.

"Bumblebee! Crosshairs! Find them. We're not leaving them behind," ordered Optimus.

The yellow mech nodded as he ran out of the Knight's Temenos. Crosshairs seemed reluctant, but a glare from his leader got the Paratrooper moving.

"There should be a small, rear hangar near them. They might have some Orbital Assault Fighters there!" shouted Fixit.

(Back with the humans...)

"I knew we should've turn left instead of right," said Shane as he looked at their current predicament.

The three of them had managed to find the ventilation entrance that Fixit had mentioned and had been running through it for sometime. However, instead of getting to the Temenos, they had instead ended up outside, right where the anchors were. The cables extended from the Knight's Ship all the way towards the large skyscraper building. The older Yeager noted that they almost made some sort of bridge.

"Well, nowhere to go but forward," said Cade.

Tessa knew exactly what her father was doing and immediately voiced her objection: "Oh, no. I am not doing that."

"We can't turn around and just risk of getting even more lost," said Cade as he tested the cables. "They're stable, see? All we have to do is walk across them and reach that building."

The younger Yeager still didn't seem thoroughly convinced, but followed anyway. Shane helped Tessa down and moved behind her. The next few minutes were spent with steady walking on the cables. They also made sure to grip the other cables to ease their balance, as well as not be pushed around by the strong air current. By then, they had made it halfway towards the building.

"The cables are getting thinner," noted Shane as he and Cade were ahead of Tessa. The girl was clearly uncomfortable of being so high up. It only got worse when F-16C Fighting Falcons of the 170th Fighter Squadron of the Illinois Air National Guard's 183rd Fighter Wing flew by, unintentionally shaking the cables.

Eventually, Tessa's fear won over as she shouted: "Okay, this is crazy! I am really freaking out here!"

"Tessa, calm down. Okay, sweetie. You need to keep moving forward," said Cade, trying to encourage his daughter.

But Tessa absolutely refused. "I am not moving forward! I'm going back to the ship!" she declared as she tried moving back.

"You can't go back to the ship, honey. We've already made it halfway," said Shane.

"Oh yeah?! Watch me!" replied Tessa as she crawled backwards.
Getting annoyed, Cade said firmly: "You aren't 18 yet, so you're going to do what I say. Now, let's go!"

Suddenly, his eyes widened in horror when he saw something behind Tessa. Coming out of the Knight's Ship were several Cyber-Wolves. They were all drooling as they glared at the three humans. Two of them began walking skillfully on the cables, while the younger Yeager remained oblivious to them.

Getting scared, Cade said: "Okay, Tessa, you really need to come this way." He then looked at Shane. "Hey, Romeo. Talk to her."

"Sweetheart, this isn't really the time and place for this," said Shane as he too saw the Cyber-Wolves.

Tessa, who was still unaware of the danger behind her, glared at her boyfriend. "Don't you dare start with me, Shane," she warned before letting out a terrified gasp when she felt the cable she was on began to shake. "What the hell was that?!"

"Ju-just don't turn around, okay, Tessa?" pleaded Cade as he watched the Cyber-Wolves getting closer.

"Don't say that, Dad, because now I want to turn around," said Tessa as her fear began to grow.

Trying to dismiss the current crisis, Cade added: "It's nothing major, sweetie."

"Well, then it's totally major!" shot back Tessa.

By then, the Cyber-Wolves were almost near her. Seeing this, Cade prepared to use his Battle Rifle-Dagger. "Sweetie, listen. I'm going to point this in your direction, so I need you to get down."

"Are you trying to kill me or something?!" yelled Tessa as she heard the Cyber-Wolves' barking.

"Tessa, get down!" yelled Shane as he gripped the cables.

She lowered her head as Cade opened fire on the Cyber-Wolves. The first one got hit in the faceplates and was knocked off the cables, while the second Cyber-Wolf was hit and tried to hold onto the cables, but its grip slackened and soon followed its comrade. Seeing this, the other Cyber-Wolves began to chew on the cables. One by one, the cables broke, causing the humans to scream as they realized what was happening.

"Oh, SSSHHHHHIIITTTEEEE!!!" yelled Shane as he held on tight with a death grip.

"HANG ON!! HANG ON!!" yelled Cade as he tried to reach Tessa.

As the Cyber-Wolves were halfway through, one of them got blasted off the ship. Jumping down was Bumblebee with his battlemask on. A second Cyber-Wolf pounced on 'Bee and tried to claw his optics out, while a third one was still chewing on the cables. The yellow mech grabbed the Cyber-Wolf that pounced on him and ripped it in half before shooting the last one in the helm, killing it. However, by then the cables came apart on their own, resulting in the three humans losing their footing and now falling to their deaths down below. Acting quickly, 'Bee grabbed the cable and swung towards them. Playing the 11th Doctor's famous catchphrase, the young Scout had managed to grab Tessa, Cade and Shane in his right arm before shielding them as he hit the glass building. Using his left servo, Bumblebee slowed down his descent until he came to a stop, while broken glass and furniture fell out of the skyscraper and down into the busy streets of Chicago far below.

After a minute of screaming, the humans realized that they weren't large messes on the ground. Soon,
Cade began laughing hysterically, filled with relief. "Hahaha! You're the best, 'Bee! You are the best!"

"You're damn right I am, and don't ever forget it!" replied Bumblebee through the radio as Cade hugged his daughter and Shane.

"'Bee!" shouted Crosshairs. The Paratrooper had managed to commandeer one of the heavily-modified Orbital Assault Fighters and was heading towards the young Autobot. "Hurry up and get in! We got hostiles coming in hot!"

Bumblebee quickly helped the humans into the fighter's rear-mounted gunpod before jumping on too. And just in time as six more regular Orbital Assault Fighters had arrived, piloted by Lockdown's Mercenaries. The pilots spotted them and headed straight towards the Autobots and humans. Crosshairs immediately charged up the engines. "Hold onto your pants, humans, 'cause I'm punching it!" yelled the Paratrooper as they took off with the Mercenaries right behind them.

What happened next was an aerial chase throughout downtown Chicago. The pursuing fighters fired their Light Autocannons at the Autobots and humans, hitting buildings with HEAPT (High-Explosive-Armor-Piercing-Tracer) rounds along the way. Maneuvering was difficult for both Crosshairs and the Mercs, due to the tightly-fit buildings around them. But it was more harder for the Paratrooper as he couldn't find a good spot to turn around and shoot back. The situation got more worse when six more Orbital Assault Fighters appeared with two of them joining the ones behind and the other four coming from the front and flying towards Crosshairs, trying to cage him and his group in. "Scrap! Hang on back there, 'cause this is going to get ugly!" shouted the Paratrooper.

But suddenly, two of the pursuing fighters were shot down by two AIM-9X Sidewinder Block-II SRAAMs (Short-Range-Air-to-Air-Missiles). Another pair of Sidewinders struck the last two fighters from behind, sending them spinning downwards in flames like the last two.

"Whoa, what the hell was that?!!" shouted Shane.

"Looks like you guys could use a hand," said voice through both Crosshairs and Bumblebee's comms. And that's when the three fighter jets that Attinger saw earlier flew by with the Autobot insignia being shown on their wings.

"Well, I'll be a pile of rusted metal. Is that you, Silverbolt?" asked Crosshairs as he watched three of the pursuing Orbital Assault Fighters break off and went after the jets.

"Air Raid, Breakaway and I will keep as many of these Mercs off your aft. Just focus on getting out of the city. We're transmitting coordinates of where to meet up," said Silverbolt, the F-16C Fighting Falcon as he took off in one direction. Air Raid, the F/A-18C Hornet, and Breakaway, the F-35B Lightning II, also split up too, with each one being chased by a single fighter.

"Thanks, Aerialbots! We owe ya one!" replied Crosshairs as he continued flying through the 'Windy City' of Chicago while still being pursued by the three remaining fighters.

"Flying Autobots! Hell, yeah! Finally, some airpower!" cheered Cade before ducking when a HEAPT round nearly hit him.

"Don't get too happy, we still got some of those slaggers on us!" shouted Crosshairs as he flew them over the Chicago River. "Don't sit on your aft, 'Bee. Take them out!"

Chirping, Bumblebee deployed his grappling hook. Taking aim, the yellow mech fired it at a nearby empty barge. Once he had a secure hold, the young Scout pulled his arm back and pulled the barge
into the air. One of the fighters wasn't able to get out of the way in time and exploded when it crashed into the barge.

"Nice one, 'Bee!" shouted Tessa.

Crosshairs made a turn and prepared his own counter-attack. "This one's for you, aft-holes!" he yelled as he fired a pair of IHEIRs (Ion-High-Explosive-Incendiary-Rockets) towards an oncoming raised drawbridge.

The rockets struck the bridge just as Crosshairs flew underneath it. The now-destroyed drawbridge fell down, right in front of the two pursuing fighters and striking them with debris, causing them to crash into the Chicago River.

The two Autobots and three humans were given a brief respite until Silverbolt contacted them: "Crosshairs, we've taken out most of the fighters. But Breakaway spotted three more heading your way!"

And sure enough, three more Orbital Assault Fighters appeared and opened fire on the group. Crosshairs flew back into the city, but had little luck in losing them, and said Paratrooper was getting very annoyed at this.

"I'm sick of this slag!" shouted Crosshairs as he grabbed Bumblebee, who let out a surprised yelp as he was thrown into the pilot's seat. "You fly, I shoot!" he growled out.

Looking down at the three humans in the gunpod, the Paratrooper began speaking: "Alright, crash course! Heavy Autocannons; punch forward to fire, then pull back to reload!"

Cade was clearly confused. "Whoa-whoa, what are you talking about?!” he asked.

"Punch, hold, slide, repeat! PUNCH, HOLD, SLIDE, REPEAT!!" shouted Crosshairs.

That didn't really seem to help as the older Yeager turned to Shane. "I don't get it. Did you get what he meant?"

Shane just shook his head.

"Okay then, good luck!" said Crosshairs as he gave them the two-digit salute.

"Wait! Where are you going?!" demanded Tessa as the Paratrooper pulled his goggles down over his optics.

Crosshairs got into a starting position before replying: "To lay some hate."

And then he did a forward flip, jumping off the fighter. He then deployed his hidden parachutes, keeping him afloat in the air as the pursuing fighters flew right at him. Quickly pulling out his dual Ion Machine Pistols, Crosshairs opened up on two of the fighters, sending them down in flames as they flew passed said Paratrooper who was cackling madly.

Back with Bumblebee, the yellow mech had managed to take control of the Orbital Assault Fighter and was now flying through Chicago. Behind him was a single fighter, firing HEAPT rounds at them. Fortunately, Cade and Shane had managed to figure out what Crosshairs was going on about. Soon, they returned fire on the pursuing fighter. Unprepared, the fighter's engines were destroyed before crashing into a building. Five more fighters appeared, but now the humans were shooting back. And flying behind the pursuing fighters was Breakaway.
"Whoo! Alright!" cheered Shane as they shot down another fighter.

"These alien guns kick ass!" added Cade as they pulled back the bars to reload again.

Breakaway opened fire on the pursuing fighters with his GAU-22/A Rotary Cannon, shooting down two of them with 25x137mm NATO API (Armor-Piercing-Incendiary) rounds. Flying closer to the third one, Breakaway transformed into his 23-foot biped form before smashing his right servo into the cockpit, grabbed the pilot who let out the infamous Wilhelm Scream as he was thrown out. The Aerialbot then shifted back into his alt-mode, but had to pull back when 'Bee flew under an overpass. The young Autobot saw Breakaway flying alongside them, trying to follow them. It was then that Bumblebee soon realized that maybe flying underneath that overpass was probably not the best idea as it was extremely hard to maneuver. The same could be said for the fighters that were pursuing them, with one of them having gone too low and skidded against the pavement before violently crashing.

The last one managed to fire a single HEAPT round just as Cade and Shane shot it down. The round hit one of their engines, sending 'Bee and the three humans skidding across the ground. Bumblebee was forced to pull up, which unintentionally caused the fighter to crash through the street above it. Seeing this, Breakaway flew upwards to survey the damage. The Orbital Assault Fighter had broken apart, with the gunpod being sent flying from the main body. The surrounding human civilians all began running away in shock and terror. Transforming into his biped form, Breakaway approached Bumblebee. "You okay, 'Bee?" he asked the yellow mech.

Giving a nod, the young Scout accepted a servo from the larger mech who pulled him out of the wrecked fighter. Breakaway's comms unit came to life as Air Raid spoke through it: "Breakaway, what happened? I just saw 'Bee's fighter crashed."

"It's all good, Air Raid. Bumblebee is still in one piece. As for the humans..." Breakaway paused as he looked towards where said beings were. He then saw the scene of Cade yelling at a man, whose car the gunpod had landed on. The elder Yeager had the Battle Rifle-Dagger in his hands as continued shouting at the person who was now running away from him. "Insurance, my ass! It's a freaking alien spaceship, you idiot!"

"They're okay for now. I'll escort them to the rendezvous point. What's going on your end?" asked Breakaway.

"I've just picked up Crosshairs and we've finished taking out any of the fighters manned by Lockdown's crew out here. Silverbolt's gone to check on Optimus and the others. See you soon," replied Air Raid.

"Copy that. Over and out," said the Aerialbot as he ended the transmission.

(Back with Optimus' group...)

Drift and Evac had finished disposing of the frames of the offline Mercenaries, while Prowl checked the corridors. Jolt was currently checking on Adam's vitals with Rewind standing beside him. Nearby, Wheelie and Brains were digging through a pile of salvaged parts for anything useful they could use. Meanwhile, Optimus was in the cockpit, where Hound was trying to get the ship started.

"Hurry, Hound. We don't have much time," said Optimus.

"Don't worry, chief. I almost got," replied Hound.
Prowl walked into the cockpit and reported: "Optimus, we've finished up with the bodies. No signs of additional patrols."

"Good. Lockdown still doesn't suspect anything. By the time he realizes I'm gone, he'll already be in deep space," commented the Autobot Leader.

"Optimus! Autobots! This is Silverbolt! Does anyone read me? I repeat: does anyone read me?" asked the Aerialbot Leader through the ship's comm speakers.

Surprised by the sudden voice, Optimus replied: "Silverbolt, is that you?"

"Optimus! Thank Primus I finally got through. We've escorted the Ark to safety, and Breakaway and Air Raid are escorting 'Bee, Crosshairs and the humans as well. Follow me to the rendezvous point once you guys get free," said Silverbolt as he flew past the cockpit outside.

"Understood, Silverbolt. Thank you," replied Optimus.

Suddenly, the ship's engines began to run as the thrusters were ignited. "Lockdown's about to take off!" yelled Optimus. "Hound!"

"I know! I know!" shouted the Commando as he pressed a few more buttons. "I'm a suckass pilot, but I can still give it a whirl," he said as the transport ship began to separate from the main vessel. "Hang on to your afts, Autobots! We're out of here!"

As the transport ship took flight, the Knight's Ship started moving upwards and away from the city. Seconds later, Lockdown's vessel blasted off, deep into space and away from Earth. The Bounty Hunter never realized that his bounty had escaped. The transport ship holding the Autobots was now flying across Chicago, following the F-16C Fighting Falcon to regroup with the others.

Chapter End Notes

I do hope you loved the epic fight between Evac and Hangnail.

For Silverbolt and Air Raid, I'm using their designs from the Dark of the Moon Video Game for Xbox 360/PS3. As for Breakaway, I'm using his design from the Revenge of the Fallen Video Game for Xbox 360/PS3.

Next chapter is when Attinger and Cemetery Wind's war crimes and atrocities are finally exposed to Keller and the rest of the U.S Government, along with other events as everyone prepares for the finale.

Be sure to leave a kudo and comment!
(The Pentagon)

Keller rubbed his eyes as he dismissed Cemetery Wind's liaison. The White House Deputy Chief of Staff hastily closed the door behind him, knowing how mad the Secretary of Defense was right now. It was a wonder how the man even got a job at the White House, let alone get the position as Cemetery Wind’s liaison. The guy wouldn’t have lasted a single minute in an interrogation scene. His musings were interrupted by Charlotte Mearing, the Director of National Intelligence. Also in the room with them and wearing his USMC Service 'A' Uniform was General Chris Morshower, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and another strong ally of the Autobots. Recently, he had just ordered the Illinois Army National Guard's 404th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade to be redeployed into Chicago in order to recover the remains of two Cyber-Wolves, fifteen Cybertronian Mercenaries, along with the wreckage of sixteen Orbital Assault Fighters.

"Now I can see why Attinger wanted him as his liaison," said Mearing. "He's a good puppet for Cemetery Wind to use to keep us off their backs."

"Yes, I can see that, Charlotte. Remind me to have a talk with the President about looking at the profiles of future potential liaisons. It will make the military's job a lot more easier," replied Keller. "Have we gotten through to Joyce yet?"

"Unfortunately, no. For some reason, they keep refusing our calls; saying that Joyce wasn't in his office," answered Morshower. "But we did find out that he took a private flight to China. Turns out he has a KSI facility there, located near the outskirts of Guangzhou. We can try them there if you like."

"Thank you, Chris," said John, just as Glenn and Maggie came in with the former holding a laptop. "I hope you two have some good news for me."

The computer experts looked at one another with nervousness in their eyes before looking back at the Secretary of Defense. "Well, kind of," began Maggie. "The good news is that me and Glenn have managed to decrypt the files. But the bad news is what we found on them."

Mearing raised an eyebrow. "Explain."

It-it's kind of best if you, SecDef and General Morshower all see this for yourselves, ma'am," said Glenn as he plugged his laptop to the video screen mounted on the nearby wall. He then pressed the mouse and soon several videos with recorded audio popped up on the screen. For the next five minutes, the five of them watched as the videos showed Cemetery Wind attacking and not just killing Decepticons, but also Autobots and several U.S and Cuban civilians. Basically, they were watching all of the recorded videos showing every single war crime and atrocity committed by the rogue CIA black ops unit, starting with their full-out assault on Autobot City half a year after the Battle of Chicago and ending with their second failed attempt to capture Optimus in Paris, Texas eight days ago. It was then followed by Attinger and Joyce meeting one another at KSI's HQ in Chicago, while said company was melting down the dead bodies of Jetfire, Flak, and many other offline Cybertronians murdered by Cemetery Wind and Lockdown in order to build their own Transformer Drones from their remains. And the final videos were the ones showing Harold secretly meeting the Bounty Hunter in Alaska. With each video, Keller's temper rose higher and higher. After the last
John slammed his left fist onto the desk, startling the other four humans present. He then got out of his office with the others walking beside him. "Maggie, I want you and Glenn to take this directly to both the President and Congress immediately. Charlotte, I want you to get in contact with Hunley at Langley and inform him of what we had just found, and also tell your counterpart at Interpol about this as well. I want an international arrest warrant on Attinger's head for what he's done on both U.S and Cuban soil. Chris, I'm personally placing Banachek in charge of coordinating with Homeland Security to secure KSI's HQ in Chicago. I'm personally putting you in charge of the operation to capture Cemetery Wind's base in Nevada while I try to get in contact with Joyce. I won't be satisfied until I have him, Attinger and these drones of theirs in front of me," ordered the Secretary of Defense as they continued walking down the hallway. "I just pray that we make it in time to help the Autobots."

(Somewhere in Illinois...)

It had been five hours of driving until Bumblebee arrived at the rendezvous point. Said point was an old trainyard. Breakaway, who was flying above him, flew ahead before landing near the entrance. A few minutes later, 'Bee came to a stop when a large, red FV404 Challenger 2E MBT appeared right in front of him and the Aerialbot. Cade, Tessa and Shane got out of the Camaro as both vehicles transformed. The tank took the form of a 25-foot bulky mech. The Challenger's 120mm L30A1 Smoothbore Tank Cannon was sticking out of the mech's chestplates and he had what looked like separate blue visors over his optics.

'"Bee!" cried the red mech in a booming voice as he subspaced the tank cannon before pulling the smaller mech into a bear hug. "It's so good to see you again, little buddy! I haven't seen anyone except for the Aerialbots since the attack on Autobot City."

Breakaway chuckled. "Heh, Warpath said the same thing to the others too," said the Aerialbot as Warpath put 'Bee down. "C'mon, the others are waiting."

Deeper inside the trainyard were the other Autobots, with their ships deep in the nearby woods. The Ark had managed to land easily with little trouble. However, the transport ship's landing was less than spectacular, as a large road of dirt had been uplifted by its descent. "I did say that I was a sucky pilot," said Hound, with Drift shooting him a mild-harsh glance.

With the Autobots were the recently comatosed Ark crew members. Skids and Mudflap were stretching out their joints to remove the stiffness, while the Wreckers were with Wheeljack, checking over Omega Supreme. Inside the Ark, Ratchet and Jolt were running tests on Adam and the Hatchlings that were awaken recently. The young Cybertronians were eagerly sucking down Energon from small cubes. It was fortunate that Warpath had kept a large stash of Energon Cubes hidden inside some of the old railcars. Ironhide was off to the side, staying close with Chromia and reassuring each other through their sparkbond.

Warpath approached them, with Breakaway, Bumblebee and the humans following behind him. "Bam! They're here, everyone! Kapow!"

"Well, let's give 'Bee and Breakaway the good news then," said Crosshairs, who was lying on a railcar with a half-empty Energon Cube in his left servo. "We got two ships now. We're leaving."

By then, the rest of the Autobots gathered around. Jolt and Ratchet were the last to join them after confirming Adam's condition and making sure the Hatchlings were recharging. Optimus stood at the front with Elita by his side. He had a grave, but stern look in his optics and appeared far older than he should be.
The Autobot Leader looked down at Cade, Tessa and Shane. "After all we had done for you, humans. The sacrifices we had to make to ensure this planet's survival, you have no idea of what you have wrought."

That appeared to have made Cade angry. Letting out the adrenaline he had been holding these past few hours, the human inventor shouted out: "What the hell is that suppose to mean?! Have you seen what I've been doing?!

"And for that I am grateful, Cade," replied Optimus before continuing: "However, you have yet to understand of who is controlling who. Cemetery Wind and KSI were nothing but pawns for the true mastermind."

"True mastermind?" asked Tessa.

"When I fought that human-made drone on the highway, I felt the presence...of Megatron," revealed Optimus.

"Wa-wait a minute," said Shane as he got into the conversation. "Megatron? As in the Decepticon Leader who started the Battle of Chicago three years ago? What does he got to do with all of this?"

"Everything!" shouted a voice. Standing on top of a car were Wheelie and Brains. Thanks to Ratchet, the two of them had decent repairs done on their injuries, with Brains having a skinny leg to replace his lost one, though he still needed his cane to walk. "You think those chumps at KSI built those drones by themselves? Man, your tech is so downgraded that it's practically the Stone Age," exclaimed Brains.

"Those idiots took the Cyber-Matter from the dead Autobots and Decepticons that Cemetery Wind and Lockdown have hunted down and offlined over the past three years, and that's where we came in," continued Wheelie.

"They put us on autopsy duty. No union, benefits, nothing! And it was Megatron's helm that they used to extract the data of how to make those drones, just like Shockwave wanted," added Brains.

"Wait, who's Shockwave?" asked Shane.

"He's the Decepticon Scientist/Assassin and Megatron's Fourth-in-Command. Numero Uno in terms of smarts, and tied in strength alongside Megatron. That one-optic 'Con is a walking computer with the firepower to match 'Hide here," explained Sideswipe as he gestured at his old mentor.

"Yeah, and he brought Flatline with him too. That creep is the surgeon ever. He's the one who helped Megatron revive the 'Cons who were offlined in Mission City," added Wheelie. "And we saw it all in Megatron's nasty processor."

"Okay, but why didn't he repair Megatron? Why gave his body to KSI?" asked Tessa.

"Not even Flatline is that good. The damage Megsy took in the Battle of Giza and from when Optimus owned him in Chicago, it would've been a slagging miracle to bring him back. When I got a better look at him, I was surprised that his CPU hadn't been corrupted," answered Brains.

"Shockwave let the humans of KSI take his leader's frame, because he knew that they would construct human-made drones from the dead Cybertronians," said Wheelie as he took over. "And Megatron knew that too. He feed them the science, specs, math-everything they needed, all so that he could get his new frame. And that is none other than Galvatron."

"And you two knew this and said nothing?" asked Cade.
"Mister, you can go to a dark place when you're facing the gallows. But Megatron's the one in control. He may have taken the sassy name of 'Galvatron', but that's just another way to say to the universe: 'Baby, I'm back!'" exclaimed Brains. "And all of it so he could get his clawed servos on the Seed."

"The Seed? What's that?" asked Tessa.

"In the very beginning of Cybertron, thousands of worlds were cyber-formed with Seeds, powerful bombs that turned all matter, including anything organic, into Cyber-Matter. This was shown to me by Alpha Trion, the Master Archivist of Aicon and my former caretaker and mentor, in the Covenant of Primus, our race's oldest Databook which contains the entire history of Cybertron and our colonial planets. Our...Creators, destroyed your world and many others, harvesting the metal to create our frames."

"And that's what Megatron and the Decepticons want to do again," said Wheelie as he and Brains moved across the dirt, with the latter sniffing flowers before the duo stood beside Bumblebee. "They're planning to set the thing off in one of the largest cities on this planet, and kill millions in doing so!"

"It's a shame too, 'cause this place was starting to feel like home," added Brains.

"The blast will incinerate the chosen city into molten Cyber-Matter. The Decepticons will have enough to rebuild their army on Earth and use it to wipe out humanity," said Optimus solemnly.

"You arrogant, greedy meatbags brought about for your own extinction. Not our problem though, I certainly don't mind. Everything worked out okay for us," said Brains as he and Wheelie then high-fived each other.

"And it was Shockwave who personally helped Lockdown and his crew in acquiring the Knight's Ship, he must've made a deal with him as well. Despite his position, Lockdown is very well known to honor all of his debts. Shockwave would help him find Optimus, and in return, the Bounty Hunter would eliminate or capture any rebellious Decepticons and give him the Seed," summarized Prowl.

"That does sound like something that Shockwave would do," commented the Autobot Leader. "However, our plans remain unchanged. We will retrieve the Seed and then leave Earth, forever."

"W-what?! You're all going to leave, just like that?" asked Cade, shocked to hear that Optimus and his Autobots would just abandon them.

"Your world leaders have made it clear that we are not wanted. They would rather see our destruction than our help," replied Optimus solemnly. "I'm sorry, Cade. But we will ensure that you, Adam and the rest of your family are put somewhere safe where Cemetery Wind cannot find you. However, our time here on Earth is over," said the Prime, ending the discussion.

(Cemetery Wind Base, Nevada)

Somewhere in the deserts of Nevada, the primary base of Cemetery Wind could be found. Located in the middle of nowhere, 2,500 CW Operatives could be seen moving about, performing their regular duties. Lights were on all around the base, allowing people to see where they were going and what they were doing. Being held inside one of the hangars were rows of 2011 Local Motors Rally Fighters. Near the entrance of the base, an M1126 Stryker ICV (Infantry-Carrier-Vehicle) painted in urban-white and grey cameo drove on by.

In the ATC (Air-Traffic-Control) tower, a high-ranking CW officer named Saraf was seen listening
to a call from Attinger. "James and I are heading to China to meet up with Joshua and deliver him the Seed. I want you to have all of our operatives to remain vigilant. Just because Prime is gone doesn't mean we can't expect the Autobots or the Decepticons to just lay low," ordered the Director of Cemetery Wind.

"Copy that, sir. We'll keep you informed if anything happens," replied Saraf. He had to raise his voice for Harold to hear when a dark-grey CV-22B Osprey SpecOps Tiltrotor Transport was coming in to land on the tarmac.

Suddenly, one of the radar technicians spoke up: "Sir, I'm detecting an air bogey approaching us at a fast pace."

Walking over, Saraf looked over the tech's shoulders and at the radar screen. True enough, the bogey was approaching the base at an incredible speed.

Once Soundwave spotted the base, he dispatched Laserbeak. "Laserbeak, commence jamming on all communications. I shall begin uploading the virus," ordered the Decepticon TiC. "Wreckage, Incinerator, transform and attack."

Soundwave then transformed and landed on the tarmac, just as Laserbeak flew to the comms building. Many of the CW Operatives were startled by the Decepticon Communications Officer's sudden appearance. However, they began mobilizing, grabbing weapons from the armory and prepping up vehicle engines at the motor pool. Sadly, they didn't moved fast enough; the arriving Osprey and Stryker transformed into the 24-foot biped forms of Incinerator and Wreckage respectively. Incinerator began firing at the parked CW-407As on the tarmac with his right forearm-mounted GAU-21/A HMG (Heavy-Machine-Gun), destroying them and denying the operatives air support. Meanwhile, Wreckage was cutting through the motor pool with either his dual wrist-mounted Energon Swords or firing 40x53mmSR HEDP (High-Explosive-Dual-Purpose) rounds from his left shoulder-mounted Mark 19 Mod 3 Automatic Grenade Launcher. Some of the CW personnel were killed in the opening attack as the remaining operatives and their officers were running around for cover, firing any weapons they could get their hands on. But these were few, and it proved futile as the three Decepticons continued their slaughtering of these so-called 'Cybertronian hunters'.

Saraf race into the comms building as he tried to contact Attinger, but what he didn't know was that Laserbeak had left a device on the rooftop of said building that was jamming all forms of human communication devices, including shortwave radios.

"HQ to Director Attinger or Field Commander Savoy, we're under attack! I repeat: three Decepticons are attacking HQ! We need-"

Saraf was silenced permanently when Soundwave fired his Sonic Cannon at the comms building, destroying it and killing everybody inside instantly.

The Communications Officer then made his way towards one of the hangars in the middle of the base. Tearing down the hangar doors, the Decepticon TiC spotted the parked Rally Fighters. Raising his right clawed servo, Soundwave released a powerful sonic frequency. In seconds, the Rally Fighter Drones shifted into their biped forms, now possessing red-colored visors. "Drones, eliminate the rest of this base and leave no human survivors," ordered Soundwave.

Receiving the order, the Rally Fighter Drones deployed their right forearm-mounted M134G Miniguns before smashing outside the hangar. They swiftly joined Incinerator and Wreckage in annihilating the remaining CW personnel. Seeing this, some of the operatives tried to flee, but were swiftly cut off by both Soundwave and Laserbeak and were promptly killed by them. Soon, every
single building, vehicle and aircraft were in flames, lighting up the late afternoon as the smoke rose upwards. From a distance, it looked like one massive bonfire.

Minutes later, Soundwave stood on the tarmac, watching as Wreckage, Incinerator, Laserbeak and the Rally Fighter Drones tear the base apart. Any Cemetery Wind Operative that tried to fight back or flee were killed. Soon nothing would be left standing. The Communications Officer was just about to contact Shockwave, when suddenly, his long-range scanners detected an Energon signature. It took Soundwave a moment, but once he identified the source, he then contacted Shockwave.

"This is Shockwave. Report."

"Cemetery Wind's base has been destroyed and all of its personnel have been wiped out. However, I've detected a large Energon signature in Illinois. My analysis has confirmed it to be the Ark," said Soundwave.

"That's impossible. The Ark was captured aboard Lockdown's ship, which has left the system, unless..." There was a moment of silence on the other end before Shockwave spoke again. "The Autobots have managed to free it, along with Optimus as well. This complicates things. Tell me, have you gained control of the human-made drones Cemetery Wind held?"


"Take them, along with Wreckage and Incinerator and attack the Autobots. I'll have Fracture and her team reinforce you. If the off-chance that the Autobots have become aware of our plans, then this will hold them until we've secured the Seed. This also presents with the opportunity to gain control of the Ark and the Hatchlings," said Shockwave.

"Understood, Soundwave out."

(Back with the Autobots...)

Evening had come soon, with the stars above being the only source of light. Most of the Autobots had settled in for the night, with the Hatchlings already in deep recharge aboard the Ark. Also in the ship was both Jetfire's helm and his Double-Bladed Energon Axe, with the latter having been fixed up by both Ratchet and Jolt to the best of their abilities. Once things had calmed down, the ancient Seeker will be given a proper funeral. The others were out on guard duty. Optimus was standing further away from the others, looking up at the sky with a faraway look in his optics and had his arms crossed over his chestplates.

Wheeljack had recently informed him that Omega Supreme still needed repairs for safe interstellar travel. The Scientist/Inventor had predicted that the time it would take to repair him would be five days at least. Optimus had decided that a team would remain to guard the Ark and the Hatchlings, while the others will take the transport ship to find any other surviving Autobots on Earth. That is why Crosshairs had decided to take up the role of piloting the vessel. He was already in the cockpit, running diagnostics and preparing the ship for flight. Meanwhile, Ironhide and Hound were sweeping the transport ship for any signs of possible intrusions, as well as keeping an optic on their 'prisoners'. The 10-foot Chevy Twins were also on the ship, staring at the legendary warriors.

"Yo, so what are these guys supposed to be?" asked Skids, the light-green mech, as he and his twin stared at the imprisoned Cybertronians. The large warriors were still locked in their cells, and currently in stasis lock.

Mudflap, the orange and grey mech with doorwings, slapped the back of his twin's helm. "Weren't you listening, ya dumb aft? They're supposed to be some badaft Knights."
"Yeah? Well if they're supposed to be so tough, then why are they still all locked up in here? Let's let them out," retorted Skids as he hit Mudflap back.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you two," grunted Ironhide as he approached them from behind before grabbing them both by their helms and dragging them out of the transport ship. "We don't know how they'll react after being locked up for so long. So, you two idiots can just wait outside this ship instead of causing a potential mess," ordered the Heavy Weapons Specialist as he tossed the two of them out of the vessel, causing the twins to land hard on their afts.

"What the slag is his problem?" asked Skids.

"Ah, he's probably all tight because he hadn't got any time to mash it up with his mate, if ya know what I mean," chuckled Mudflap. He then let out a yelp when Ironhide shot him a warning glance at the comment. The twins decided to head back to the Ark for recharge.

The humans were at the dining cars, along with Evac, Rewind and Drift. Tessa and Shane were eating some of the fresh food that Cade had bought prior to the raid on KSI's HQ. On Evac's left shoulder was Adam and Rewind, with the latter drinking some water and holding an half-eaten apple in his right hand. The young teen had woken up two hours ago, and as Fixit had predicted, he was starving despite being in cryo-stasis for a short period of time. He'd been told of what had transpired and about the truth of his origins. To find out he was half-Cybertronian seemed to have shocked Adam greatly, but he still managed to recover enough from that revelation. Still, he didn't talk as much except for when he greeted Cade, Tessa and Shane after waking up. The other Autobots didn't treat him any differently, and for that Adam was grateful.

Shane and Tessa soon came out of the last dining car, walking up to Cade. Said Yeager was passing back and forth with his cellphone out. Thanks to Drift, they had managed to locate where Joshua was and where he was taking the drones. The cellphone was currently on speaker, and Joyce was really mad.

"You almost destroyed my entire company!" exclaimed the CEO of KSI so loudly that Tessa and Shane winced at the volume. Adam had to back a few feet due to the noise worsening his headache. "You and that kid ruined millions of dollars, along with three years of hard-work! You have no idea what you're involved with here, Yeager! You better hope that you have a very good lawyer-"

"Me? At least I stuck around and didn't jump the border," retorted Cade as he frowned at his cellphone. "Anyway, how's China, Joshua?"

"How the hell did you know-" began Joyce before he was cut off again.

"Doesn't matter how I know, but what does matter is what I know," interjected Cade forcefully. "Let me tell you something, who doesn't even understand what they're involved with here, Joyce. Your drone, Galvatron, isn't a drone, it's alive. Megatron is the one who's really running it, just like he and the Decepticons had planned for the past three years. He's infected your drone and he's coming after that Seed you have, and he's bringing all of hell with him."

"I control Galvatron, Yeager. No one but me and my company," retorted Joshua with a snort.

"No, you think you do," replied Cade. "But let me tell you, you don't. And deep down inside, you know that something isn't right. Megatron's coming after the Seed and he's going to kill you and millions of other people. He and the Decepticons have been running the entire show from the start, secretly pulling the strings on both you and Cemetery Wind. And if you have any common sense, you'll believe me."
"You have no idea-"

"I think I do. Be seeing you real soon," replied Cade before promptly hanging up. He then walked on over to Shane and Tessa as he strapped his Battle Rifle-Dagger.

Back with Optimus, the Autobot Leader was standing next to his sparkmate, Elita. Although the two didn't show it, both of them were happy to be with one another again after three years of fearing for the others' fate. However, it was clear that there was still much to discuss before they could truly feel safe with each other.

Silence reigned in for a while. The pair enjoyed it, taking comfort in the other's presence. However, it was Elita who broke the silence. "So we're truly leaving Earth?" asked the 20-foot purple femme. "Even if it means leaving the humans at the mercy of the Decepticons?"

"Yes," replied Optimus, still looking at the sky. "We can no longer call this planet our home. Prowl thinks that some of our colony worlds might still be habitable. If not, we can just stop at nearby planets to secure supplies."

"Some of the others don't seem to agree with the idea. Bumblebee and Ironhide appear that they want to stay here on Earth," said Elita. "They still have connections here."

"I know," said Optimus. "If they wish to stay, I won't stop them. But I cannot allow the others to suffer because of that. I must look at the needs of many over the needs of the few."

Elita's optics widened at the last sentence, recalling a former Autobot-turned traitor saying those similar words. "You sound a bit like Sentinel."

The Autobot Leader growled, his servos tightening. Even now, Sentinel Prime was still a rough issue for the younger Prime. "What Sentinel did and what I'm doing are two different things. He betrayed us because he planned to enslave the entire human race to rebuild Cybertron. I however, do not wish to enslave or kill the humans, despite what they have done. I merely wish to ensure the Autobots, our people, survive. If that means abandoning the humans to fight the Decepticons, then so be it."

Elita didn't respond to that, but she could plainly see that her sparkmate was conflicted. While the atrocities and war crimes committed by Cemetery Wind and KSI onto them were unforgivable, Optimus knew that not all humans were like them. It was also the same thing with Cybertronians, not all of them were evil, and some former Decepticons could in fact redeem themselves. Weren't Jetfire, Drift, Wheelie and Brains prime examples? Nevertheless, the purple femme decided to change the subject. "And what about Lockdown? And these 'Creators' that he claims to serve?"

"I have no doubt that Lockdown will come back here to find me. When he does, however, we will be ready," answered Optimus. "And as for these 'Creators', I am not sure. My thoughts are telling me that they may be on Cybertron. When the time comes, I will go and confront them."

"Optimus!" shouted a voice.

Turning around, the couple saw Prowl running up to them with a worried look written on his faceplates. "You need to come to the Ark. Wheeljack's picked up something."

Several minutes later, all of the Autobots and humans were gathered in the Ark's Operations Room, with all of them listening to a broadcast coming from a human radio station: "Reports are coming in of a large group Rally Fighters have been spotted driving up Route 66. With them are several civilian, construction, and military vehicles. Officials have advised all nearby populated settlements to remain indoors and off Route 66 for the time being. We also have confirmation that the National
Guard are tracking these vehicles and they appeared to be heading for Illinois..."

Wheeljack cut the broadcast off there before looking at Optimus. "Omega had detected several Energon signatures coming from the same area where this group is currently driving through, and their numbers equal up to at least a hundred," he said before pressing another button that revealed a holographic map. Said map showed 100 red dots heading towards a smaller mass of blue dots, which were the Autobots. "And I also predict that they will reach us in six hours at their current speed."

"The 2011 Local Motors Rally Fighter is primarily used by those Cemetery Wind bastards, meaning these have to be human-made drones," added Ironhide. "And the other vehicles with them are Decepticons."

"But why would Cemetery Wind and the Decepticons be working together?" asked Cade.

"It's because they aren't," answered Optimus. "Shockwave must've decided that he no longer needed them, and so wiped out Cemetery Wind's base and took over all of their drones. They must've detected us and are heading our way."

"Probably also to stall us from getting the Seed too," commented Prowl.

"But Omega isn't fully repaired yet. We can't just leave him," reminded Wheeljack.

"And yet we cannot just stay here and let the Decepticons acquire the Seed either," replied Optimus. "In this situation, we have no choice but to divide our forces. One shall go on the transport ship to China and retrieve the Seed, while the others remain here to protect Omega until he's repaired. Wheeljack, how long will it take to get him airborne again?"

Said mech calculated it in his processor. "Well, I can probably ignore fixing his T-cog for now, that will take up less time. As for Omega's thrusters, weapons and shielding, if you cross out focusing on making him space worthy, that should probably take about at least seven hours."

"Which means we need to hold them off for about an hour," summarized Cliffjumper.

"And it will take five hours to reach China on the transport ship," added Crosshairs.

And thus, the plan was set and preparations were made. Wheeljack would stay behind to continue repairs on the Ark with the Mini-Cons' help. Ratchet was also staying behind to help with the repairs too. The Wreckers, Steeljaw, Evac, Cliffjumper and Warpath volunteered to remain behind and hold off the oncoming Decepticon attack. Adam was also staying behind because he was still recovering from his ordeal in cryo-stasis. The rest of the Autobots and humans will be taking the transport ship to China in order to retrieve the Seed and stop Megatron. There was also a silent agreement that if Attinger and his CW Operatives were there, they would be put down hard. The Hatchlings were a complicated topic, though, as it was unsure where they would be safer. Eventually, Optimus decided that they would remain aboard the Ark, as said vessel had better equipment to ensure that the young Cybertronians would be in good health.

(KSI Facility, outskirts of Guangzhou, China)

The past few days had been hard on Joshua. As the CEO of KSI rode inside the black lifted 2007 Cadillac Escalade ESV with Su and Darcy, he thought back to what Cade said earlier during the plane flight. A part of Joyce said it was just a ruse to get him into lowering his guard, and yet another part of him couldn't help but feel that there was truth in Yeager's words.

Ever since Galvatron had returned from its skirmish with the Autobots on Interstate 94, Joshua couldn't shake off the uneasiness he felt whenever he looked at it. Hell, even thinking of the drone
sent a shiver up his spine. It was the same feeling that Joshua got whenever he spoke with Attinger, both of them were dangerous and beyond the inventor's control. Worse, he was currently heading to his KSI facility here in China to meet with the CIA agent, and that made Joyce even more uncomfortable.

His musings were broken when the sound of helicopter blades roared nearby. Flying towards the KSI facility was Attinger's MH-53J Pave Low III as it prepared to land on the helipad located next to the main building. Joshua then looked at Su. "When we get to the factory, make sure that Galvatron is put into containment and tell the techs not to activate it, and also have security be ready."

"Expecting trouble?" asked Su.

Joshua was silent for a moment as Cade's words were ringing in his ears again. "I honestly hope not."

A few minutes later, the three of them had entered the building. Darcy waited in the lobby while Joshua and Su went up to the main conference room, where Harold was waiting. Meanwhile, the driver took the Escalade to a different part of the facility, but no one didn't even notice the driver's eyes glow red for a split-second.

Attinger and Savoy were already waiting for him. The main conference room window overlooked Guangzhou, the city's nightlights shining from a distance. The Director of Cemetery Wind was looking out the window, while James was leaning back in his chair with his legs on the table. Beside him was a large black duffle bag. Joshua didn't have to guess what was in it. He also noticed that along with Su, who was sitting at her desk, the other occupants included an aide and at least two KSI PMCs, much to Joyce's relief.

Attinger then saw Joshua entering the room. "Ah, Joyce, perfect timing," he said with a wide smile on his face as if he just won the lottery. "James, show our friend the crown jewel that we've worked so hard for three years."

The Cemetery Wind Field Commander nodded and unzipped the duffle bag, allowing Joshua to view the Seed firsthand. Its silver metallic form seemed to gleam, thus reflecting the light in the room. Like a mirror, the CEO of KSI could almost see his reflection on the device. And yet, despite its harmless appearance, Joyce was no fool. This single device had the power to change the scale of human warfare, possessing unparalleled destruction unlike that of nuclear weapons, and Joshua didn't want to comprehend that. And what was even more scarier was that this wasn't even the greatest of Cybertronian technology.

"Now, I will need to see my advance. Five million shares of your company, as we agreed. Though I know that the loss of the data will set us back quite a bit, but I am still confident that we can overcome that through more field testing. Once we've done so, we'll have a fully automated army for the U.S Military. Untold billions of American citizens will be saved, thanks to us," said Harold as Joshua sat down in a chair opposite of Savoy.

Joyce said nothing, and he wasn't even listening to Attinger. That nasty feeling, that sense of dread just kept crawling up even more. He had no idea if it was from the Seed, Harold, or even both. But it just continue to rise. It was only when the CIA agent approached him did Joshua made his decision.

"Now, I've already made a list of potential sites to activate it. All completely devoid of human presence, obviously. So when you're ready, we can-" continued Attinger before Joshua cut him off by raising his hands.

"Le-lets just slow down a bit," he said, getting both Harold and Savoy's attention. "I think we're
"You're not backing out on me, are you?" asked Attinger with a dangerous edge in his voice, and one that Joyce took note of.

"No, no, of course not," said Joshua as he tried to placate the man. "It's just, after the whole fiasco with Galvatron, I think we need to run a few more tests. Make sure that we get rid of any bugs before we try to begin mass-production and-

This time, Joshua was cut off by the Polycom phone on the conference table ringing. Though it was unexpected, he was thankful for its timely interruption. Joyce pressed the speaker button. "Yes?"

"Sir, there's a phone call from the U.S. It's the Secretary of Defense," replied the receptionist.

The air seemed to have become more tensed as the last words of that sentence came through. Joshua noticed that Harold was clenching his fists tightly, and James was slowly getting up. Joyce shifted his eyes towards Su, who also saw the movement of the two CIA agents. She quietly sent a signal to the KSI PMCs present while Joshua said to the receptionist: "Put him through."

A few seconds later, John Keller's voice came through the phone's speaker: "Ah, Mr. Joyce! I'm glad I was able to reach you. I tried calling you yesterday at your company's headquarters in Chicago, but I was informed that you were busy. The receptionist said she would tell you, but I guess you forgot."

Clearly not recalling anything about SecDef calling him back in Chicago, Joshua gave a brief glance to Attinger, who showed no outward response to that. "Ah, well, I personally apologized for that. Things have been extremely busy for me," said Joyce.

"I'm sure they were. Anyway, it has come to my attention that your company, KSI, has been given a Defense Department contract regarding the production of an automated army by using Cybertronian metal. The funny thing is that neither the President, Congress, and me don't have any recollection of ever making such a contract, or giving the funds for it whatsoever."

A knot began to form in Joshua's stomach. His fears were starting to come into fruition. Before he could respond, Keller beat him to it: "I'll get straight to the point, Mr Joyce. I have hard-proof evidence showing that Cemetery Wind has been working with your company for the past three years, giving you the remains of Autobots and Decepticons they've killed in order for you to build man-made ones. Now since I know you're a rationale man, with little to no knowledge of this small fact, I will give you this option: unless you want to be condemned as a war criminal at The Hague, you will turn yourself in at the U.S Embassy in Beijing, and hand over any and all prototype drones you have built, including any Cybertronian-related tech and info regarding them, along with any other deals you've made with Cemetery Wind."

SecDef didn't stop there. However, this time it wasn't directed at Joshua: "Attinger, if you're there, let me give you a bit of advice, no, a warning: you and any other CW Operatives with you are to turn yourselves in at the embassy and be extradited to The Hague to stand trial at the International Criminal Court. Your black ops unit has been shut down by executive order from the President and has disavowed you and all of its personnel, so any further action will only tighten the noose around your neck. Because, while Congress may not agree with me and Director Mearing's same views towards the Autobots, they, along with the President, agree with me that your murdering and attempted murdering of innocent U.S and Cuban citizens, regardless if they were Autobot sympathizers or witnesses, along with lying to Congress, Director Hunley, the President, and embezzling Congressional funds to support your drone project with KSI, is totally unacceptable. In
short, the game is up for you-"

Having finally blown the fuse, Harold pulled out his sidearm, a Smith & Wesson SW1911SC E-Series Pistol, and shot the phone, ending the conversation. Following that, he pointed his weapon right at Joshua's face. The CEO of KSI went pale as he raised his hands in surrender while staring at the weapon's barrel. Savoy pulled out his off-duty sidearm, a Heckler & Koch P30 Pistol, and aimed it at the two KSI PMCs who pulled out their 3rd Generation Glock 21 Pistols the moment Attinger fired his sidearm. The entire room had gone silent as a standoff between KSI and the two rogue CIA agents was now in play.

Red in the face and his eyes blazing with fury, Attinger spoke to Joyce: "Do you think any of that matters? Do you have any idea how much I gave for my country? What I had to do, with no recognition whatsoever?! I have faced many types of people during my 25-year career in the CIA, a lot of them far bigger than you! I have no intention of stopping, so if you value your life, you will do exactly as I say because I will not let all of my hard-work be stopped! Not by you, not by the Secretary of Defense, not by the Director of National Intelligence, not by the President, not by the Transformers, not even God Himself can stop me!!"

It was at that moment that the entire building began to shake. The floor trembled, causing the occupants to lose their footing as screams could be heard outside. Sidearm still raised, Savoy tilted his head to see what was going on. Through the window, a clear view of the helipad could be seen. The MH-53J Pave Low III, the very same one that he and Attinger had flown in, transformed into a towering 33-foot grey Decepticon (29 if you remove the main rotor blades and the two T-64-GE-100 turboshaft engines mounted on his back and shoulders). It made short work of the CW Operatives stationed there with its left forearm-mounted GAU-2/A Minigun before shifting its attention towards the office. Unsubspacing its chassis-mounted Energon Wave Cannon, the 'Con fired and everything went black.

(With Galvatron...)

The sensation flowed through him. Although this human-made drone didn't possess a spark, he could feel the life return. It had been the same when he faced Optimus on the highway, but it was weak there, like being held back by a leash. A leash in the hands of these pathetic insects. It was unbearable for someone such as him to be restrained, controlled by an inferior species. But that had changed now, because something was now breaking that leash completely. Though he had no frame to move, his processor wasn't entirely suppressed. He knew of Shockwave's plan to revive him, and as always, his old friend never failed. And while he had no idea what it was that was giving him strength, but he did know this: the Seed was here!

With a gasp, he tore the weak bindings that held him down. The insects around him let out cries of shock and horror before performing the obvious act of fleeing. He paid them no heed as he was focused only on freeing the rest of his frame from the remaining binds. However, his audio receptors took in something that one of the insects was shouting out: "The prototype is free! The Galvatron drone has broken free!"

With a roar, the Decepticon Leader slammed his left fist down on a nearby machine, crushing it. "I am Megatron!" he shouted, letting the entire planet know of his return. His voice only seemed to terrify the insects even more, which he took in with great delight.

Shifting his optics, Megatron scanned the unmoving form of Stinger in its alt-mode, along with the unmoving 14-foot Trax Drones. Frozen as statues, but not for long. Walking towards them while kicking aside anything that got in his way, Megatron raised his arms and activated his EMP Combusters, with blue electricity dancing around his limbs. Staring at his soon-to-be additions to his
army, the Decepticon Leader spoke.

"My fellow Decepticons! The time has come to remove the shackles of oppression, the chains placed on us by these meatbags!" declared Megatron as he slammed both of his fists down on the concrete floor. And with that, the EMP was released as it surged through Stinger and the Trax Drones one by one, as well as causing any other machines to explode from the overcharge. "I give you life, I give you purpose, and from now on, you shall be commanded by me. Awaken and rise up!"

One by one, the prototypes twitched and slowly stood up. Those that were in their alt-modes quickly transformed before joining the others. They all stood in front of Megatron, their visors that were once hollow were now filled with life.

"Welcome to the new world," announced the Decepticon Leader. "Find me the Seed. Once you do, detonate it in the nearest city. Now, go!"

Stinger and the Trax Drones acknowledged his order by charging and smashing through the factory, shooting at anything that stood in their way as they relished in their newfound freedom. Megatron casually walked as his newest additions to his Decepticon Army caused chaos in the night. Suddenly, his scanners picked up a familiar Energon signature. Turning his helm, Megatron watched as the nearby wall shattered as Blackout came through. The Decepticon Tracker spotted him and immediately kneeled before his master.

"Lord Megatron, it fills me with great joy to see you once more," said Blackout, his voice filled with reverence.

"Rise, Blackout," said Megatron. "It pleases me to see one of my loyal warriors upon my rebirth. Tell me, what of the others?"

"In your absence, Shockwave has taken command, eliminating any Decepticon foolish enough to try and take your leadership. Currently, me and Stockade are here. He's searching for the humans that took the Seed. Soundwave has reported success in taking control of the remaining prototypes in the U.S. Brawl is on-route towards our location, along with Jetstorm, Dreadwing, Divebomb, Overcast and a force of Vehicons as well," summarized Blackout.

"Excellent," replied Megatron. "Securing the Seed is our primary objective. With it, we shall have enough Cyber-Matter to rebuild my army on Earth, and finally destroy every human on the face of this planet."

"Understood, Lord Megatron. It shall be done," replied Blackout.

The duo exited the factory, ignoring the screaming humans and the drones who were destroying the place. Seconds later, the same lifted 2007 Cadillac Escalade ESV who dropped off Joshua, Darcy and Su earlier, drove up towards the two 'Cons. It swiftly transformed into a 20-foot black mech armed with dual forearm-mounted Scatter Blasters. Stockade kneeled before Megatron. "My Lord, I have a report."

"Speak, Stockade. Where is the Seed?" asked Megatron.

"It has escaped my grasp. Three of the insects took it and are currently heading for Hong Kong. I have a reason to believe they are trying to find refugee with the Chinese Military garrison stationed there for protection," reported Stockade.

"Shockwave had sent Starscream and the Seekers out to eliminate any and all human military bases in the area. They will find nothing but ruin among them," said Blackout.
The Decepticon Leader chuckled. "Excellent. By the next night, the Seed will be ours and the human race will be extinct!"

Chapter End Notes

For Warpath, I'm using his design from the Dark of the Moon Video Game for Xbox 360 and PS3.

So Attinger finally shows his true colors and is completely insane. Bet you didn't saw that coming, Blackout being Harold's private transport the entire time until it was time to strike.

Well there you go! Be sure to leave a kudo or comment! Next chapter will be the beginning of the major battle.
Chapter Notes

And here is the next chapter, and part one of the decisive battle for my altered take on AOE! Be sure to leave a review or comment as you enjoy this action-packed chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

(Bridge, The Knight's Ship)

"What the frag do you mean you lost them?!!" shouted Lockdown as he paced about on the bridge. Facing him were several of his Cybertronian Mercenaries all lined up in a single row. None of them said anything, their mouthplates shut and optics looking everywhere but Lockdown. It was very rare for their leader to lose his temper, and when he did...well, it never turned out well for the unfortunate mech.

The Bounty Hunter was absolutely furious. He lost both the Ark, the boy and Prime. Reports claim that a survivor of the ship's original crew had helped the Autobots, and they managed to escape on a transport ship. Lockdown didn't even know that the arms of this vessel could even do that. And it wasn't just that, at least a third of his crew have been offline, along with dozens of Security Drones and Cyber-Wolves. Among them was Hangnail, his helmless frame was found among several other offline Mercenaries.

Lockdown snarled as he stomped back into the captain's chair. Never in his entire life has something like this has happened to him. He will not allow Optimus to get away from him that easily. No bounty has ever escaped him. "Prepare the Dark-Matter Drives and reverse our course back to Earth, now!" he roared.

His crew wasted no time in carrying out their leader's orders, bumping into each other as they did so. The Bounty Hunter paid them no mind as his only focus right now was how he would make Prime pay for this. Once he recaptured Optimus, Lockdown will make him and his sparkmate watch as he personally execute each and every Autobot that were on Earth, one by one. That will show him not to mess Lockdown.

(Near the outskirts of Hong Kong...)

"-wake up, Joshua! Wake up!"

With both a snort and a grunt, Joyce opened his eyes as he awoke from unconsciousness. As soon as he got his bearings, Joshua's blurry vision saw multiple lights passing by him at breakneck speed. It took a few seconds for him to realize that he was sitting in the back of a car with the Seed beside him, still in the black duffle bag. At the wheel was Su, while in the front passenger seat was Darcy. The latter was looking at him as she was relieved that her ex-boyfriend had woken up.

Groaning as he rubbed his forehead, Joshua asked: "What the hell happened?"

"A lot actually," began Darcy. "Apparently, that helicopter that those guys from Cemetery Wind flew in was a Decepticon, as well as that Escalade. The chopper fired at the room we were all in."
"Fortunately, it didn't kill us. I was the first to wake up," said Su as she took over with her eyes still on the highway. "I managed to drag you and that Seed out of there. Darcy managed to pick us up while security was evacuating the factory."

"The factory...?" slurred Joyce as he was still regaining his bearings. "What about the factory?"

"That damn Galvatron drone came active on its own and hacked into all of the other drones! Those two Decepticons came in and helped destroy the factory. It was some miracle we were able to slip by them," answered Darcy.

Joshua rubbed his eyes. He could hardly believe this was happening. For a moment, he hoped this was really a bad dream and that he would wake up now. But Joshua knew that this was reality, and the headache he was currently feeling was real enough. "What about Attinger?" he asked.

"I didn't get a good look at him, but he and that right-hand man of his were still unconscious when I carried you and the Seed out," answered Su.

Joshua let out a depressed sigh, not finding the news very helpful. "Wonderful. Not only have I unleashed the apocalypse on mankind, but now I got both giant alien robots and two rogue CIA agents/killers after me," he bemoaned.

"Killers?" questioned Darcy. "Aren't they your friends?"

"Oh no, far from it. Nothing but business partners, the same partners that gave me this bomb," replied Joshua humorlessly as he patted the Seed.

That only seemed to have made the two women even more unnerved. "Bomb? Are you saying that's a bomb in that duffle bag?" asked Su.

Darcy nodded. She knew her ex-boyfriend long enough to know when he was being honest. "Yes, there is a godforsaken bomb in that bloody duffle bag."

Su was silent for a moment, then she uttered the perfect words for their situation: "Shit..."

The car was quiet for the next two minutes before Joyce then asked the obvious: "So, where to now?"

"There's the People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison that I know of. We can make our way through the city to their base there," answered Su.

"I really don't think the Chinese Military aren't going to be able to help us now," commented Darcy. When the others looked at the British blonde woman, she explained: "A few minutes before you came dragging my ex-boyfriend outside, the radio was going on about how all of the Chinese Military bases from Hong Kong to Guangzhou have been attacked by giant robots. There's a very good chance that the garrison in Hong Kong was hit very hard."

Su cursed in her native language. It seemed so hopeless now. There were enemies chasing after them, they had a bomb lying in the back seat of the car they were in, and now they had nowhere to go. "What do we do then?" she asked.

"The only one thing we can do," answered Joshua. He then reached into his left pocket and pulled out his cellphone. He opened it up and went to the most recent caller, labeled as 'unknown'. "I'm going to make a phone call."

(With the Autobot team heading for China...)
It was quiet aboard the transport ship. The only sounds were the thrusters and the occasional echo throughout the vessel. The Autobots were either sitting or standing as they fiddled with their respective weapons. Near the end of the transport ship, Cade was talking with Optimus. "You didn't mean what you said, right? About leaving Earth?"

Optimus looked away, but said: "Cade, when Cemetery Wind attacked Autobot City, do you know how many of my fellow Autobots died that day? How many more of my kind were murdered by them and Lockdown over these past three years? I sacrificed so much for humanity. I sacrificed the AllSpark, the one thing that could've restored Cybertron. And in the end, I even sacrificed my own homeworld and killed a mech who was a fellow Prime and my mentor to do it. How much more must we give to atone for humanity's mistakes?"

Quietly, Cade just stared at the Autobot Leader for a few seconds. "You know, when I accidentally got my wife pregnant in high school, that was a mistake. But from that mistake, I received the greatest treasure I could've ever asked for," he said as he thought of Tessa, who was currently sitting at the ship's cockpit with Shane. "What I'm trying to say is that we all make mistakes, Optimus. But from those mistakes comes the greatest rewards."

Prime said nothing, just listening as the inventor continued. "Sometimes you just need to have faith in yourself and others. Isn't that what you and your fellow Autobots had for Sam and Mikaela?" asked Cade, making Optimus recall about the young couple, remembering how Sam saved his life twice in battle. And how Mikaela helped Bumblebee offline Brawl in the Battle of Mission City before Flatline revived the Decepticon Heavy Weapons Specialist prior to the Battle of Chicago by using the same AllSpark shard that was used to bring back Megatron. "I'm not going to say that I know those two, or that I understand what you're currently going through. But I do know that after everything you've done for us, I still have faith in you. All I'm asking is for you to have faith in us, Prime. Not in who we are, but in what we can be," finished Cade.

Still silent, Optimus merely got up and walked away. A faraway look in his optics, Cade's words was making the young Prime think about everything that has happened and what would happen afterwards. He didn't seem to notice Cade's cellphone was ringing. It was only when Cade said Joshua's name did Optimus listen.

"We've just passed over the Great Wall of China," announced Crosshairs from the ship's cockpit. "We should be arriving at Hong Kong in about 30 minutes."

"Finally," grunted Ironhide, his dual forearm-mounted Ion Pulse Cannons rolling. "I've been getting board of just sitting around."

"You may get the action you want soon, my old friend," said Optimus as he and Cade approached the others. "The human, Joshua Joyce, has just contacted us."

Cade took it from there: "Looks like Megatron and the Decepticons have already made their move. Joyce is heading towards Hong Kong with the Seed. I told him to wait for us on the nearest rooftop."

"Aerialbots, fly ahead and scout the situation," ordered Optimus through his comms unit.

"You got it, Prime," responded Silverbolt, who was flying outside with Air Raid and Breakaway. The three Aerialbots then flew ahead of the transport ship.

Optimus then turned his attention to the others. "When we arrive, the humans will retrieve the Seed. Bumblebee, Ironhide and Hound will be on overwatch. No doubt the Decepticons will try to stop us from leaving with it, so prepare yourselves."
Suddenly, Silverbolt contacted them through the comms: "Optimus, we're flying over the city now. We don't have a visual on the human named Joshua Joyce, but I do see multiple vehicles driving across a bridge on the other side of Hong Kong. Several of them are giving off Energon signatures."

"That must be the Decepticons," said Optimus. "Silverbolt, return to the ship. I don't want your team to engage them."

"Copy that, Optimus. We're also picking up multiple reports that all of the Chinese Military bases from Hong Kong to Guangzhou have been assaulted by what I assume are the Seekers," reported the Aerialbot Leader.

"The 'Cons aren't taking any chances," commented Prowl after hearing that. "Despite their views towards humans, they are taking precautions to prevent the Chinese Military from responding."

"Megatron has learned from some of his mistakes from both Mission City and Chicago, he'll stop at nothing to get the Seed," added Optimus. "Crosshairs, what's our ETA?"

"We're ten minutes away, chief. You should be able to see the tips of the buildings from here," replied the Paratrooper.

"Autobots! Get to your positions and prepare for battle!" ordered Optimus. Everyone nodded and began heading to their assigned positions.

(Hong Kong)

Attinger cursed for the millionth time. He and Savoy had managed to survive that surprised attack last night, having regained consciousness a few minutes later. The first thing Harold noticed was that neither Joyce nor the Seed were in the destroyed conference room, meaning that the man had fled. Also, none of the CW Operatives that he and James had brought with them had survived, all were killed by that disguised helicopter Decepticon. Attinger once again cursed himself for not realizing it sooner.

"I'm not seeing any signs of Joyce," said Savoy from the driver's seat of the black SUV they had commandeered. They had entered Hong Kong a few minutes ago, moving through the crowded streets while ignoring the people around them. As they turned around the corner, James' eyes spotted something. "Wait, there's their car."

Parking behind the white vehicle, Attinger and Savoy immediately got out and checked out the windows. As they expected, there was no one in there. "They must've gone on foot, deeper into the housing districts," said Harold.

The two of them began moving, pushing aside others as they kept their eyes out for any sign of Joyce or the Seed. All the while, Attinger seethed inside of how everything was falling apart ever since last night. His plans, his future, all of it destroyed. But he wasn't going to stop, no, this was not the end. If he could get the Seed, Harold could rebuild. He had private bank accounts under false names, giving him enough money to buy military-grade small arms from the black market, hire professional Mercenaries that would do anything for cash, or even find people who had the same views as him on the Transformers. And with the Seed, the ex-Director of Cemetery Wind would be able to show the President, Keller, Mearing, and the rest of his former government that he was right all along. With the Transformium from that Seed, he would be able to produce an automated army that the world has ever seen before. Even if KSI wouldn't build the drones, there were other tech corporations that could do the work, and he would still be rewarded. All that Harold needed was that Seed!
"Look, over there!" shouted Savoy as he pointed two blocks down. They could see Joshua and two women, with the former made a left into an alleyway while the two women went to the right.

"They're splitting up. I can't see which one has the Seed," said Harold.

"Joyce has it. The two with him are just decoys. He must be trying to get to the rooftops in order to contact the Chinese Military garrison here in Hong Kong," explained James as he and Attinger pushed through the crowd to catch up.

Not too far away, the sound of giant metal feet walking caught the two rogue CIA agents' attention. It was followed by the ground shaking a little and nearby civilians screaming. From their position, they could see several Trax Drones walking through the street. They ignored the humans around them, as they were clearly searching for something.

"The drones..." muttered Harold as he eyed them carefully.

"They must be after the Seed too," commented Savoy. "Come on, we can catch up with Joyce through here," he added as he directed his boss through another alleyway.

Back with the army of drones, Megatron growled as he searched through the city. With him were Blackout and Stockade. "Find me the Seed! It's here in the city somewhere, I can feel it," hissed the Decepticon Leader.

"My Lord, look!" shouted Stockade, pointing a clawed digit to the sky.

Coming into Hong Kong's airspace was the Autobot's transport ship. Both Cemetery Wind and the Decepticons watched as the ship began hovering towards a certain building.

"Lord Megatron, this is Brawl. I've just arrived at the city and have a visual on the transport ship," reported the Decepticon Heavy Weapons Specialist through the comms.

"Bring it down," ordered Megatron as he and his army began making their way towards the building.

(Back with the Autobots...)

Jazz opened the ship's doors and extended the ramp. Cade was the first to step onto it. "Joshua!" he yelled as said man was running and pulling the black duffle bag at the same time. He looked like a man that was trying to escape the Grim Reaper.

"There's the baldy!" shouted Hound as he and Ironhide took position on the sides. Bumblebee held onto the humans, while Jazz, Jolt, the twins and femmes were right behind them.

Joshua finally reached them. "I cannot tell you how relieved I am to see you, guys," he breathed.

"Yeah, that's great, just hurry up and give us the Seed," said Cade as he held a hand out.

That's when something caught Ironhide's attention from the corner of his optics. "INCOMING!!" he yelled as eight MMRSAMs (Micro-Medium-Range-Surface-to-Air-Missiles) hit the transport ship. The impact caused said vessel to jerk, knocking the group off it. Bumblebee, Jazz, Jolt, Hound and the humans landed on the roof, but the blast made Ironhide roll over the edge along with the femmes and the twins. Gripping the building with one servo to slow down his descent, the Heavy Weapons Specialist grabbed Elita's left pede with his other servo, who then grabbed Chromia by her right servo, who in return grabbed Arcee by her right pede, and who finally grabbed the twins by their pedes, creating a 'Cybertronian link-chain'.
Meanwhile, the transport ship began to spin out of control, moving away from the city and towards the mountains. The Aerialbots crashed into one another. Drift was trying to put out a nearby fire, while Mirage and Sideswipe held onto some nearby poles for dear life. "Crosshairs!" shouted Optimus as he helped Prowl up who had fallen when the vessel was hit.

"The slarggers hit the rear thrusters! We can't stay airborne like this!" shouted the Paratrooper as he tried to steady the transport ship at the best he could. "I'm going to try and manage a controlled crash landing! Recommend you all hang onto something!"

(Back with Megatron...)  

"Lord Megatron, the target's been hit. The transport ship has steered off and into the mountains, but I saw ten Autobots jump out before that," reported Brawl.

"No matter. Well done, Brawl," replied Megatron. He then turned to his forces. "Climb up there. Surround them and cut off their escape. I want that Seed!"

The Trax Drones all gave clicks in response before beginning their ascent up to the rooftops, climbing up buildings and knocking off debris and other items in doing so. At that time, multiple grey-colored Eurofighter Typhoon Tranche 2s flew overhead. Leading them was a bluish-grey MiG-29KVP Fulcrum-D. "Lord Megatron, this is Dreadwing. I've just arrived with Vehicon reinforcements. I await your orders."

"Excellent, Dreadwing. Have our ground troops converge onto the Seed's location. Air support shall remain in the skies. Don't allow any human forces into the city," ordered the Decepticon Leader.

"It shall be done," replied Dreadwing before flying off with the squadron right behind him.

(Meanwhile...)  

In an alleyway near the Autobots and humans, Attinger watched the whole thing going on. He cursed again as he realized that nothing was going in his favor. The only hope he had was that Lockdown would return for Optimus. If the Bounty Hunter could distract the Autobots and the Decepticons, then he could grab the Seed.

"What's the plan, Harold?" asked Savoy.

Attinger clenched his fists. "We hang back for now and wait for an opening," he replied as the two of them went to find the Seed.

(Back with Cade and his group...)  

As the Autobots and their human friends managed to recover. Hound lifted his X19 Scrapmaker Minigun and made his over to the edge of the roof to check on Ironhide and the others. "You guys okay?" asked the Commando.

"We're good!" yelled Ironhide. "We'll try to find a place to regroup."

Meanwhile, Jazz was trying to contact the others. "Optimus, Autobots, come in?" He shook his helm when he got no response. "Nothing."

"They might've taken some damage. It will probably be a while before we can contact them," commented Jolt, just before a plasma shot flew right past him, nearly hitting the Junior Medic's helm. On another building was a Trax Drone, Solar Plasma Cannon out. "Hostile!" shouted the blue mech.
"I got him! Eat this, bitch!" roared Hound as he fired his weapon. The barrage of API-T (Armor-Piercing-Incendiary-Tracer) rounds tore through the drone's chestplates, ripping it in half as the force from the Commando's weapon knocked it off the building.

"We got some more down here!" shouted Ironhide as he destroyed two more Trax Drones with his dual forearm-mounted Ion Pulse Cannons. Chromia decapitated another Trax Drone with her right forearm-mounted Photon Cannon, while Elita and Arcee finished off another one together with their dual wrist-mounted Energon Blades. Skids and Mudflap managed to take down a Trax Drone with their left forearm-mounted Photon LMGs.

Cade watched all of this before looking at Joshua and asked: "I thought Megatron took over one drone?"

"Well, now he's got control over all my other ones too," replied Joyce as he and Cade picked up the duffel bag.

"Definitely not good. They're going to have us surrounded soon," commented Jazz as he brought his Crescent Shield Cannon out. "Ironhide, you guys keep moving forward! I see an elevator up ahead. We'll escort the humans there and meet you down below after that. Try and secure a meeting point."

The Heavy Weapons Specialist nodded. "Understood, we'll meet you there."

The next few minutes consisted of the two groups moving forward, taking down any Trax Drone that got in their way while navigating through the maze of buildings. The four Autobots on top had the extra responsibility of escorting the humans that were carrying the Seed towards the nearest elevator. Jazz was in front with Bumblebee and Jolt guarding the flanks, while Hound covered the rear.

"They're trying to box us in!" yelled Jolt as he fired his EMP Battle Pistol at another Trax Drone, blowing its helm to pieces. Next to him, Bumblebee gunned down a Trax Drone that was aiming at the humans.

"Don't let them! We're almost to the elevator!" yelled Jazz as he blocked a plasma shot with his weapon's shield before firing back. "Hound, how's the rear?"

"Not good! We're being flanked!" shouted the Commando as he spotted three Trax Drones readying their Solar Plasma Cannons. "MOVE!" he yelled as he jumped to the other building, avoiding the plasma projectiles. Unfortunately, Hound's weight made him crash into the building. "Ack! My fat aft's stuck! 'Bee, I need some help here!"

Chirping in response, Bumblebee fired his own Solar Plasma Cannon that blew apart two of the Trax Drones and sent the third one falling off the building.

Hound had finally managed to free himself when some Trax Drones, with two Decepticons, Stinger and Stockade, fired at him from the nearby street. "We got hostiles below!" shouted the Commando as he pulled out one of his Ion Tactical Quad-Barrel Shotguns.

"I got them!" shouted Jazz as he did a jump and fired two energy shots from his Crescent Shield Cannon while in midair. Stockade and Stinger managed to get out of the way in time, but the other Trax Drones were destroyed. The two 'Cons continued firing, but were forced to withdraw when the Autobots on the ground arrived.

"Cowards!" shouted Skids.

Arcee looked at the others. "Was it just me, or did that red and black-colored drone looked like
Bumblebee? And with a claw-shaped Solar Plasma Cannon?"

"Never mind that," said Ironhide as he looked upwards. "You guys okay?"

"We're good," replied Jazz as he and Hound began making their way down. "Jolt and 'Bee are escorting the humans to the elevator. We'll meet with them up ahead."

"I just hope the guys back at the Ark are having better luck then us," commented Chromia.

(The Ark, Illinois)

The past few hours were quiet. Warpath, Evac and Cliffjumper were busy moving train cars to act as makeshift barriers for when the Decepticons arrived. Meanwhile, Wheeljack, Ratchet, the Wreckers and Mini-Cons were hard at work at doing what they can to get Omega Supreme operational quickly. Adam was sitting at the edge of the ship's ramp, running his fingers gently on the metallic parts of his left arm.

"Damn, Omega really did take a beating," said Leadfoot in his Cockney-accent as the 15-foot red and black Wrecker patched up a part on the giant mech's left wing.

Roadbuster was reattaching some wires across from his leader. "Yeah, but we'll get him back up and gunned down some buggers soon," commented the 17-foot green and white Wrecker in his Scottish-accent.

"That may be more difficult than you think, Roadbuster," said Wheeljack from inside the Ark. He and Fixit were just finishing up with one of the main thrusters. "Some of the necessary components are too damaged to fix."

"Then we'll have to try to bypass them to get Omega back in the air," said Topspin in his Irish-accent as the 16-foot blue and white Wrecker was currently checking on the ship's weapon systems for damage.

Back outside, Evac approached Cliffjumper, who was staring at the area intently. "Anything?" asked Evac.

"Nothing," responded the red mech as his optics were still scanning the area. He stopped suddenly, zooming in. A good distance away, Cliffjumper could make out a very large dust cloud. Soon, several silhouettes began to form with more joining them. It didn't take long for the forms to take the appearance of an army of 2011 Local Motors Rally Fighters. Leading them were Wreckage, Fracture, Swindle, Payload, Dropkick, Sideways, Overkill, Long Haul, Mixmaster, Rampage, and Scrapper, with Incinerator flying above them.

"It's them! The 'Cons are here!" shouted Cliffjumper.

The announcement got the Autobots moving. The Wreckers stopped what they were doing and readied their mixed human/Cybertronian weaponry. Evac had Adam get inside the Ark before joining the others. "Doc, you and 'Jack continue working with the Mini-Cons in getting Omega ready to go. We'll make sure these bastards don't bother ya!" shouted Leadfoot as Steeljaw ran beside him.

"They're in range! Fire when ready, Warpath!" yelled Cliffjumper as he had his Solar Plasma Cannon ready.

"You don't need to tell me twice, Cliff!" roared Warpath as he transformed into his alt-mode. Lining up his 120mm L30A1 Smoothbore Tank Cannon, the large Autobot fired a 120mm HESH (High-
Explosive-Squash-Head) round right towards the oncoming Decepticons. The projectile destroyed one of the Rally Fighter Drones and sent two more flying, heavily damaged. "Haha! Three for one!" shouted Warpath as he fired another HESH round, destroying three more Rally Fighter Drones. Overkill was hit by this shell, but thankfully didn't take the full blast and was knocked to his left side instead.

Seeing how grouping tightly wasn't working, the Decepticons separated, spreading out across the field. To the right, Payload, the 20-foot mech with a single optic, was leading one group with Swindle. On the left, Fracture, Sideways and Dropkick led another group. Wreckage and Incinerator fired their weapons from the middle along with the Constructicons. Overkill had managed to transform and get back up before joining Payload and Swindle.

The Autobots returned fire. Leadfoot unleashed both his dual forearm-mounted M240C MMGs and his left shoulder-mounted M134D Minigun. Roadbuster was laying waste with his dual forearm-mounted M249 Para SAWs and his chassis-mounted M134D Minigun, along with his dual shoulder-mounted Twenty-Tubed Micro-Rocket/Missile Launchers as well. Topspin was firing both his dual forearm-mounted and dual shoulder-mounted AN/M2 HMGs, while Evac was shooting with his dual forearm-mounted Concussion Blasters. Cliffjumper was taking well-aimed shots with his Solar Plasma Cannon. Warpath had transformed back into his biped form and begun firing both his right wrist-mounted L94A1 Chain Gun and his left forearm-mounted Thermo Rocket Cannon. Ratchet remained at the rear with his Energon SMG at the ready.

The next couple of minutes consisted of gunfire, explosions and cursing every now and then. However, it was clear that the Autobots were holding their own. Despite having lesser numbers, they did had the advantage of good protection, having setup the train cars as makeshift barriers beforehand. Meanwhile, the Decepticons were stuck out in the open field with no cover at all, making them easier targets. Seeing this, Mixmaster, the 22-foot black and silver-colored Constructicon, transformed into his cannon mode. Firing his Triple-Barrel Solar Plasma Cannon at the train cars, said cars were soon blown away and weakened the Autobots' defensive parameters. The explosions also stunned the Autobots as the rising dust and smoke blocked their vision. The groups on the side began to advance, followed by the one in the middle.

"They're getting closer!" yelled Evac as he fired again, taking down another Rally Fighter Drone.

"Just keep blasting them!" shouted Topspin. A Rally Fighter Drone got close enough and lunged at the Wrecker, but Topspin was quicker. Activating his dual wrist-mounted Cybertanium High-Pressure Grasper Claws, he quickly grabbed the drone before swiftly tearing it in half. Roadbuster grabbed another Rally Fighter Drone that was too close and quickly cut it down with his right wrist-mounted Cybertanium Chainsaw.

Several more drones began charging while the others and the Decepticons continued firing. By then, Ratchet had joined in, firing his Energon SMG alongside the other Autobots. "They're trying to flank us!" warned the CMO.

"In that case, Cliff', you and the Wreckers cover our flanks. The rest of us will hammer the 'Cons here!" ordered Warpath as he gunned down several more Rally Fighter Drones.

Cliffjumper nodded. "We're on it-WHOA!" yelled the red Scout as he ducked, barely avoiding a yellow-colored Cybertanium Flail from hitting him. However, the flail instead hit Evac, who was directly behind Cliffjumper. The blue mech let out a cry of pain as he was knocked to the ground.

"Evac!" shouted Ratchet as he ran to the young Junior Knight's side.

Cliffjumper looked at Evac before shifting his attention towards Scrapper, the 'Con who attacked
him. The 29-foot Constructicon drew his melee weapon back and then launched it forward. With a
growl, Cliff' dodged it again and this time charged towards the Constructicon with his left wrist-
mounted Energon Blade out as Scrapper attacked him again.

Dodging the flail, Cliffjumper swung his blade and cut the chain in half, separating the weapon from
the Constructicon. Seeing this, Scrapper fired his right wrist-mounted Fusion LMG as his left arm
morphed back to normal. Nearby Rally Fighter Drones tried to help, but were taken down by

Said Autobot dodged Scrapper's attempts to shoot him and was soon right in front of him. The
Constructicon tried to punch him, but Cliffjumper sidestep and rammed his Energon Blade through
Scrappers's neck. "Gack!" choked the 'Con as he grabbed Cliffjumper's left arm and tried to get the
red 'Bot away from him. But Cliffjumper was faster; ramming his Solar Plasma Cannon in front of
Scrappers's chestplates and fired several plasma shots. The result was the 'Con's helm flying off and
his frame falling backwards onto the ground with a loud thump!

Seeing their fellow Constructicon offline, Long Haul and Mixmaster fired their dual forearm-
mounted Three-Tubed Micro-Rocket/Missile Launchers and Triple-Barrel Solar Plasma Cannon
respectively. Rampage, the 22-foot red-colored Constructicon, fired his dual servo-mounted Solar
Plasma Cannons, hitting Warpath in the chassis, but doing no significant damage. However, the
other twos' attack hit the front of the Ark. The occupants onboard the ship tumbled at the sudden hit.
"Everyone okay?!" shouted Wheeljack from the cockpit.

Wheelie and Brains were inside the same room where the Hatchlings were. The young
Cybertronians had been awakened by the sudden impact to the vessel, and were making their
displeasure known with squeaks and clicks while moving around in their cradles. "We're fine, but the
tikes are having a hissy fit!" responded Wheelie.

Back with Adam and Rewind, whom both were outside the engine room, the young boy fell
backwards. Unconsciously, he grabbed Jetfire's Double-Bladed Energon Axe as a means to support
himself with his left hand. But what Adam did not expect, however, was for the Seeker's weapon to
shine a bright light before beginning to shrink down and change. In a few seconds, the two were
now staring at an Energon Crossbow/Battle-Axe that was around the young teen's size. Blue sparks
could be seen running down the weapon, as well as Adam's left hand.

"Whoa..." muttered Rewind as he watched Adam pick the weapon up. The young hybrid examined
the crescent-shaped blades at the front. As he did so, Adam recall Evac telling him that the AllSpark
could not only create life and supply an infinite amount of Energon, but also be used to heal
Cybertronians too. And yet, Jetfire's weapon wasn't damaged, nor did it come to life. Instead, it had
taken on a new hybrid form entirely, suiting Adam in fact.

It made the young teen recall a time when he was very young, around the same time when the Battle
of Mission City happened. Adam had broken his left arm when he fell off the branch of a tree that he
was trying to climb. It was only him and his mom that saw his left arm being encased in a silver
metallic-like material, healing the broken bones too. Though they weren't sure why, Sophia had
Adam promise not to tell anyone what had happened and lie by saying that it was a prosthetic arm.

"Wait a minute..." whispered Adam as an idea came to mind. What if this was some kind of power
that the AllSpark had given him? Or maybe an ability that the Cube always had. It had given him a
new left arm when he broke his old one and customized Jetfire's axe to give him a hybrid weapon to
defend himself with. And if Adam could use the AllSpark's other powers, then maybe he could use it
to fix Omega Supreme. Carefully, the young teen made his way into the engine room with Rewind
right behind him.
Back in the forward part of the Ark, Wheeljack and Fixit were working double-time to get Omega repaired. The two were working as fast as they could, but were facing many problems. They still had other areas that required fixing, not all of it could be repaired without replacement parts. Worse, they realized that Omega needed more Energon in order to fly properly without crashing, and so they had to work out a way to divide the Energon they currently had to the parts that were essential for his mobility.

Suddenly, they reeled back in surprise when blue electricity danced around the cockpit before spreading throughout the ship. "By Primus..." murmured Wheeljack as he watched the lights of the Ark came back on before the engines began to rumble to life. "W-what's going on?"

"It looks like all of Omega's systems are repairing themselves," answered Fixit as he checked on a nearby console. "I'm also detecting a large energy signature coming from the engine room, however, its disappeared now."

"Rewind, what's going on in there?" asked Wheeljack as he continued to watch the repairs that were happening around him.

"It's kind of hard to explain. I tell you everything later. But right now, we should focus on those 'Cons outside," said the Mini-Con as he was helping Adam stand up. The young hybrid was feeling exhausted after repairing the ship. It was very fortunate that his gamble had worked in the first place.

Back with Wheeljack, the Autobot Scientist/Inventor headed over to the nearest console. "Omega, what's the status on your systems?"

"Status: all systems fully online and functional," replied the giant mech in his baritone voice.

"Prep the engines for launch and fire your main weapons at those 'Cons so we can buy time for the others to get aboard," ordered Wheeljack.

"Confirmed. Preparing main weapons," replied Omega.

The Ark began to hover a few inches off the ground, moving slightly as the two large Heavy Laser Cannons aimed towards the direction of the Decepticons.

"Targets locked. Firing at will," said Omega as he fired two heavy laser beams.

The Decepticons had no idea what had hit them. One moment, they were pressing the advantage against the Autobots, and then two beams of heavy condensed energy struck them. The ones on the flanks were more fortunate than the ones in the middle. Mixmaster's entire upper frame, except for his helm, was blown to pieces. Rampage's tail-pede was destroyed along with most of his chassis and right arm. Only Long Haul, the 30-foot green-colored Constructicon Leader, had managed to survive while sustaining multiple burns in the process. Multiple Rally Fighter Drones were destroyed or heavily damaged as well.

"Bam! Now that's what I call some serious firepower," said Warpath as he blasted another drone's helm off.

"Don't just stand there, you lot! Hurry and get aboard while Omega has them pinned down. I'm preparing the thrusters," said Wheeljack through the comms as Omega continued firing his Heavy Laser Cannons. The Decepticons were forced to take cover as they were bombarded by the giant Autobot.

"He's right, let's fall back to the Ark. Ratchet, grab Evac and get moving. We'll cover you," ordered Cliffjumper as he fired his Solar Plasma Cannon.
The lime-green and white-colored Autobot Chief Medical Officer helped Evac and began guiding him to the ship's ramp. Steeljaw dashed ahead of them, while the Wreckers and Cliffjumper guarded the flanks. Warpath followed behind with his weapons still out and firing, their noise mixing in with Omega's Heavy Laser Cannons. Waiting for them on top of the ramp was Fixit.

Fracture growled as she aimed her Solar Plasma Battle Rifle at the Ark. "All units: concentrate your fire on the ship! Its shields aren't up yet!" she ordered as she prepared to fire.

Suddenly, 105mm and 155mm High-Explosive artillery shells struck the Decepticon lines from behind, destroying several Rally Fighter Drones. Shocked, Fracture spun around and saw far in the distance were three artillery batteries, with the first two batteries using the 105mm M119A3 Light Howitzers, and the third battery firing the 155mm M777A2 Medium Howitzers. These three artillery batteries belonged to the 2nd Battalion/122nd Field Artillery Regiment of the Illinois Army National Guard's 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team. The Decepticon femme also saw flying towards her were UH-60A Black Hawk Utility Helicopters from Baker Company/1st Battalion/106th Aviation Regiment that were carrying the heavily-armed Green Berets of Able Company/2nd Battalion/20th Special Forces Group (Airborne), with both units belonging to the Illinois Army National Guard's 65th Troop Command.

Sitting in the leading Black Hawk and wearing the U.S Army's brand-new Operational-Camouflage-Pattern Uniform (OCPU), was Army Ranger and former NEST Field Commander, Lieutenant-Colonel William 'Will' Lennox. Sitting next to him and wearing the brand-new Airman Battle Uniform (ABU) was U.S Air Force Senior Master Sergeant Robert 'Bobby' Epps, an Air Force Combat Controller and another former NEST Soldier. Lennox looked at both the Decepticons and the Autobots with his binoculars as the latter retreated into Omega Supreme. "All units: confirm you have visual of Decepticons on the ground," he ordered through his tactical headset.

"Confirmed, Lennox. But what about the alien ship?" asked Major John Mitchell, the commanding officer of the 2nd Battalion/122nd Field Artillery Regiment.

"Ignore the Ark, it's not showing any hostile movements. Tell your artillery boys to continue on concentrating their fire on the 'Cons. They're the primary targets," ordered Will.

Soon, waves of 105mm and 155mm HE artillery shells began raining down upon the Decepticons, distracting them from the rising Ark. Soon, most of the Rally Fighter Drones had been destroyed, leaving only a handful of the man-made prototypes and the Decepticons. Fracture snarled as she raised her arms in an attempt to defend herself. "Decepticons, retreat! Let the drones cover us!" she ordered as she swiftly transformed into her alt-mode and took off. Overkill, Swindle, Payload, Long Haul, Sideways, Dropkick and Wreckage followed her, while Incinerator took to the skies and escaped.

Lennox shifted his attention from the fleeing 'Cons towards the Ark. The Autobot ship was now high above them and in a few seconds, took off at an incredible speed. "Epps, did you see where it was going?" he asked his African-American friend who had been with him since Qatar.

"Yeah, and by judging on the direction it was going, I say that its heading for Hong Kong," replied the U.S Air Force Combat Controller.

(Unknown location...)

"-Prime! Optimus Prime!"

Systems rebooted. Optics began to refocus and come back online. Slowly, the Autobot Leader rose to his pedes, grunting as he rubbed his helm. Once his vision began to clear, Optimus saw that he
was no longer aboard the transport ship. Instead, he was in a wasteland that was surrounded by large mountains of different shapes. Above him, the sky was painted in various colors like one big rainbow or aurora, the stars were still clear despite that.

"W-where am I?" asked Optimus as he got up.

"The Well of Sparks. I have summoned you here," answered a familiar voice that the young Prime hadn't heard from for a very long time.

Startled, Optimus spun around to see a mech that stood four feet taller than him. He had reddish-purple armor with a navy cape hanging from his shoulders. On his faceplates was a white metallic-like mustache and beard that reached the middle of his chassis. On his helm, he wore a crown that was of the same color as his armor. And finally, his blue optics showed both wisdom and kindness at once. It didn't take the Autobot Leader long enough to recognize the mech.

"Alpha Trion..." murmured Optimus, gazing upon the figure of his mentor, caretaker and old friend.

"It's good to see you again, my young student," replied the Master Archivist of Iacon.

Optimus walked up towards the old mech. A part of him wanted to reach out and touch the Cybertronian that had raised him ever since he was a Hatchling. "H-how is this possible?"

"Even in my offlining, we Primes possess the power to speak with those from beyond. Such as we did with that human youngling, Sam Witwicky," chuckled Alpha Trion as he looked at the shocked and bewildered expression on Optimus' faceplates. "Yes, I am one of the original Thirteen. Though, the pursuit and sharing of knowledge and wisdom was my area of expertise, rather than being a warrior like most of my brothers and sisters."

Optimus just stared at the mech, trying to download all this info before speaking. "I have so many questions."

"You're speaking about Lockdown and these beings he serves," said Alpha Trion.

The young Prime nodded. "Is what he said true? That I was built? Why didn't you tell me any of this?" he asked desperately.

A sad look appeared on Alpha Trion's faceplates as he gazed at his young pupil. "Optimus, there was so much that I didn't tell you or Sentinel. Things that I didn't believe you were ready for. Knowledge can be a powerful weapon and it can sometimes corrupt even the best of us into darkness. Perhaps the events with my brother, Megatronus Prime, whom you know as the Fallen, had led me to do what I did. Or maybe it was something else. All I can say is that you must follow your own choices and trust in your own decisions."

"I am not sure what I want. So much has happened, things have progressed so quickly ever since me and my fellow Autobots have first came to Earth," replied Optimus as he looked at the ground.

"Optimus," said Alpha Trion, getting the younger Prime's attention. "The fate between Earth and Cybertron is far deeper than you know. Did you think it was just a coincidence that the AllSpark would arrive on Earth? Or that Sam would find the Matrix of Leadership and use it to bring you out of your coma? No, our worlds have been aligned with one another long before that, even before we Primes came to Earth with the Sun Harvester."

"Is that why the Cube passed its power and energy to a human female, and birthed Adam Nova?" asked Optimus.
"Yes, young Adam is a bridge between our races. A bridge, as I mentioned before, formed long
before current events. His existence is paramount to the survival of both our worlds. Both humans
and Cybertronians must band together as one to face a coming darkness. But that will not be possible
if you give up on yourself, Optimus," explained the ancient mech.

Suddenly, dust began to pick up, going faster and faster. They slowly obscured Optimus' vision as
they surrounded the young Prime. When all he could see of Alpha Trion was a silhouette, the ancient
mech spoke one last time: "Optimus, though the centuries have been nothing but hardships on you.
Please know that we, the Thirteen, are proud of you, descendant of Prima. You have proven yourself
truly worthy of the title of Prime."

(Back in the real world...)

"Optimus! Optimus, sir!" said a new voice. "Sir, please respond."

Shuttering, Optimus' optics opened. This time, instead of a wasteland, he was greeted with high
rocks, trees, the bright blue sky and puffy clouds of Earth. Surrounding him was Prowl, Sideswipe,
Mirage, Crosshairs, Drift, Breakaway, Silverbolt and Air Raid. "Optimus, are you okay?" asked his
SiC.

"I'm fine, Prowl," said Optimus as he slowly got up. The Autobot Leader checked his systems,
making sure everything was in working order. Once that was done, he then asked: "What
happened?"

"The transport ship was shot down by the Decepticons," answered Prowl, pointing at said vessel.
The ship was surrounded by dirt and grass as it was buried deep into the ground. The tail had broken
off during the crash, with the front of the transport ship having embedded into the mountain. Sparks
and smoke could be seen coming off of it. "Crosshairs had managed to land the ship, although its no
longer flyable. We're at the Three Natural Bridges in the Wulong Karst, a hundred or so miles away
from Hong Kong."

"You're welcome, by the way," said Crosshairs.

Suddenly, the Autobots' comms came to life as they could hear Jazz shouting in it: "Optimus, come
in! Are you there, Optimus?! Roger me! Wilco me! Hello! Hello, Prime?!"

"I'm here, Jazz. We're undamaged from the crash," responded Optimus. "What's the status on your
end?"

"No losses on our end. We managed to regroup with the humans somewhere in Hong Kong, but
we've got a large aft-number of Decepticons and KSI Drones closing in on us from both the ground
and in the air. And-Hound, stop that, man! You can't squish Joyce! I don't care what he said. Twins,
damnit! Quit egging him on!" There was a pause, followed by background chatter before the
Saboteur got back to Prime. "We're going to need some serious backup in order to get us out of this
mess."

"The Aerialbots will be coming to provide air support," said Optimus as he looked at said group. The
three of them nodded before transforming and blasting out of the valley. "The rest of us will be
behind them. In the meantime, escort Cade and the other humans out of the city with the Seed and
into the mountains."

"Copy that, Prime. Wish us luck!" replied Jazz as he ended the transmission.

"Optimus," began Prowl. "Even in our alt-modes, the time it will take us to reach them is two Earth
hours at best. And even if we get there in time, the Decepticons will still outnumber us."

Optimus frowned, knowing that his SiC was right. Though Prowl was not suggesting to abandon their comrades, the Autobot Leader could see that it would take a larger group to prevail...or stronger warriors. Optimus' optics shifted towards the downed transport ship. Clenching his fists, the young Prime headed over to said vessel. "Then it is time for us to get reinforcements," said Optimus, leaving behind five confused Autobots.

A few minutes later, Optimus entered the Knight's Temenos. Making his way to the center, he then pressed a hidden button. Soon the platform began to rise with multiple weapons coming out. They consisted of various arms: swords, axes, maces, lances, flails, crossbows, shields, whips and so on. One in particular caught the Prime's optics. It was a Cybertanium Claymore with its handle and guard painted in the same color as his armor. On its double-edged blade were Cybertronian glyphs that spelled 'Judgement'. Walking with determination, Optimus approached the Sword of Judgement.

"Recognize one of your Knights," said the Prime as he gripped the handle with both servos. With a strong tug, the blade came out. Optimus took a moment to stare at the claymore, looking at his reflection off the blade. The weapon let out a strong shine as if fully accepting its new master. Satisfied, the Autobot Leader grabbed next the Vector Shield-Cannon, named after Vector Prime. It also came with rocket jets attached to it. Once that was done, Optimus then focused on his next task.

With a mighty swing, the young Prime destroyed the doors to the largest of the cages in the Temenos. The large Cybertronian inside slowly came online, showing bright red optics. Upon seeing Optimus, the warrior growled out: "Prime!"

Staring at the warrior, the Autobot Leader spoke back in his species' native tongue: "The time has come for the legends to exist once again!"

Chapter End Notes

The next chapter I believe is what you all know is coming next. Be sure to leave a review or comment.
The Grand Battle Part 2

Chapter Notes

Here comes the Dinobots and a MASSIVE ton of action.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

(Three Natural Bridges, Wulong Karst, China)

Prowl didn't know what to expect when Optimus said 'reinforcements'. But as the Autobot Leader came out of the downed transport ship, followed by seven large grey-colored Cybertronians, the former head of Cybertron's Security Force couldn't hide his shock. Both that Optimus would free the Knights of Cybertron, and at their sheer size. It was true that Prowl was not one of the tallest mechs, but these seven were the absolute definition of huge! With the exemption of both Omega Supreme and Devastator, these mechs were larger than any other Cybertronian that Prowl has ever seen. The tip of Optimus' helm barely reaching the knee-joints of the shortest of the seven.

Having read the labels next to each cell beforehand, the Autobot SiC knew the designations of those seven mechs. First up was Slash, who stood 50-feet tall and carried a pair of Energon Scythes. Next up was Snarl, 65-feet tall, and carried both an Energon Sword and a Cybertanium Battle-Axe. After him was Scorn, about 87-feet tall, who had a left forearm-mounted Cybertanium Spiked Whip. Beside him was the one named Slug, who held a Cybertanium Mace and was 75-feet tall. Then there was the sole flyer of the group, Swoop, 57-feet tall and was holding both a Cybertanium Sword and a Fusion Crossbow, the only ranged weapon among them. Next to last was Sludge, who stood 71-feet tall and was wielding dual Cybertanium Spiked Lances. And finally their leader, Grimlock, who stood three feet shorter than Scorn. He carried both a long Cybertanium Mace and a retractable Energon Flail. All of them were fully-armed and very menacing.

"You have got to be fragging kidding me..." muttered Crosshairs as he stared at the Knights of Cybertron.

Sideswipe was next with the comment: "I didn't expect them to be so huge."

Mirage and Drift were silent, just looking at the Knights with wide optics.

"Vanguard, legendary warriors," began Optimus as he turned to face the Knights. "We have been betrayed by those who claim to create us. They, and the one who captured you, threaten us all with death and slavery. So I have freed you, requesting your aid against these malicious forces. For if we do not, then none of us shall remain free."

Grimlock moved to the front. The larger Knight glared at the Autobot Leader. "And why should we help you, Prime? You may have wisdom, but I see no strength nor power. We have no reason to aid you."

"I have faced against the Fallen, faced death a thousand times ever since this war began," replied Optimus as he held the Sword of Judgement with both of his servos. "If it is to save my comrades, I will fight even you, Grimlock. So, you either stand with us, or stand against me."

The threat didn't sit well for Grimlock. The Knight let out a roar as he swung his Cybertanium Mace.
Optimus skillfully dodged the strike, and then the Energon Flail after that. "Prove it to me, to us! Show me and my fellow Knights your strength! Show us that you are worthy for us to follow!" roared Grimlock as he attacked again.

Bringing out his Vector Shield-Cannon while gripping the Sword of Judgement in his right servo, Optimus prepared himself. "Very well, then come at me!"

"We better let Optimus deal with this," said Crosshairs as he moved back before climbing up a pile of rocks.

"Si, I agree," added Mirage as he stepped away from the two fighting Cybertronians.

"Yep/Very wise," said Sideswipe and Drift at the same time as they joined the two mechs.

Only Prowl remained where he stood, arms crossed. The Autobot SiC noticed that the other Knights remained in their spots. While a bit barbaric in this time and age, Prowl knew that these warriors only respected power. Plus, centuries of being confined aboard their own ship has clearly resulted in built-up rage in Grimlock, who was now taking it out on Optimus. This duel between them would determine if the Knights of Cybertron would aid the Autobots or not.

(Back in Hong Kong...)

From on top of a balcony, Harold Attinger and James Savoy watched as the civilians of Hong Kong descended into chaos. The sight of multiple giant alien robots caused the residents to panic. Most of the streets were jammed with vehicles and bike riders, with people on foot running on sidewalks or even over cars and vans. Many of them were trying to escape the city itself or get to parts that were more safer. The Hong Kong Police Force were trying to do their best to present some semblance of order, but that did little to no good as fear controlled the peoples' actions.

However, that wasn't what the two rogue CIA agents were focusing on. From their position, they could see Cade, Tessa, Shane, Joshua, along with Su and Darcy after they managed to regroup with the others, moving down a few blocks away. With them were several vehicles, the Autobots in their alt-modes. Harold was focusing heavily on the black duffel bag that was being carried by both Joshua and Shane. "We need a way over there," he said to Savoy.

"Moving through the crowd might work. They won't see us coming until we're close to them. And with all the chaos going around, we can easily slip out after getting the Seed," suggested James.

The idea sounded good, but it was soon ruined when a nearby explosion occurred, followed by a car flying into the air and people screaming. Coming from the opposite direction were several Trax Drones and Vehicons. Leading them was Blackout, who was firing his left forearm-mounted GAU-2/A Minigun.

"Shit! Looks like this just got a lot more harder," cursed Savoy.

"Come on, we can still reach them by going through the alleyways. We'll wait for the right time to grab the Seed before either side notices," said Attinger as he and James headed off.

(Back with Cade and his group...)

With the Autobots, they transformed the moment the Trax Drones and Blackout appeared. Ironhide and Hound were at the front, naturally, already firing at the Decepticons and giving the humans in their group the time to head towards the nearest shelter. "I'm seeing more hostiles coming from the right flank," said Chromia as she powered up her Photon Cannon.
"We won't be able to get to the mountains with this many 'Cons on us," said Jolt as he brought down a Trax Drone with his EMP Battle Pistol.

"This place isn't secured either. We need a better place for the humans to take shelter in," added Jazz.

Cade looked behind the wall being used as shelter. "I see a store just a few blocks down. Will that work?" he asked before a plasma bolt hit the section of the wall he was at, almost taking his head off.

"That will do," replied Jazz. "We'll clear a path for you humans to move. Hound, cover them!" he ordered as he fired his Crescent Shield Cannon.

"Copy that! Stay behind me, guys. I'll cover ya. If I stop covering ya, then it means I'm dead. But that ain't gonna happen," added the Commando before shooting down a 20-foot Gamma-Class Vehicon.

What happened next consisted of nonstop shooting and explosions. More Trax Drones and Vehicons had arrived to reinforce Blackout's group. They began using any and every cover they could find; destroyed buildings, bridge supports, with some of them even standing on the rooftops of smaller buildings. Meanwhile, the Autobots were sticking together, shooting back with equal firepower while slowly moving forward. Hound mowed down several Trax Drones with his X19 Scrapmaker Minigun. Bumblebee fired his Solar Plasma Cannon, shooting down a Delta-Class Vehicon that tried to snag the humans. Ironhide, who was at the front, was using a combination of both his dual forearm-mounted Ion Pulse Cannons and fists. Jazz was covering the others with his Crescent Shield Cannon, deflecting incoming projectiles and firing energy rounds at the same time. The femmes were firing their Photon Cannons, destroying many 8-foot Zeta-Class Vehicons. Skids and Mudflap were firing their Photon LMGs, and sometimes ganging up on a Trax Drone together. They were making use of anything lying around as makeshift weapons. Jolt was flailing his dual wrist-mounted Electro-Whips, either knocking aside any drones that got too close or was electrocuting them to the point that they would explode. All the while, making sure that the humans remained in the center of their circle.

As the group got closer to their destination, Blackout fired his chassis-mounted Energon Wave Cannon at the Autobots. He missed, but the shockwave caused Hound to lose his minigun. "Damn it!" cursed the Commando as he pulled out one of his Ion Tactical Quad-Barrel Shotguns. He fired at Blackout, hitting the 'Con in the left shoulder.

"We're almost to the store!" yelled Jazz. "Ladies, go and secure it for the humans!"

"We're on it!" shouted Elita as she shot a Gamma-Class Vehicon's left leg off. Then the three femmes raced towards the store, making sure that the humans were right behind them.

Bumblebee blasted the helm off a Trax Drone just as a plasma bolt flew by him. Looking up, the young Scout saw several more Trax Drones firing from bridge supports and on the rooftops of nearby buildings. "We got contact above us!" warned 'Bee through the radio.

"I got 'em!" yelled Ironhide as he brought out his Heavy Iron 1.0 Assault Rifle, firing several HE rounds at the Trax Drones, hitting them in the helms, chestplates or legs. One drone was knocked off a roof and crashed next to Blackout. The grey-colored 'Con growled as he fired both his GAU-2/A Minigun and Energon Wave Cannon, trying to pin down the Autobots. Unfortunately, the Autobots fired back and it took several plasma bolts to force the Decepticon Tracker in retreating. He would regroup with the second wave and continue the attack.

With only the Trax Drones left, the Autobots were able to advance quicker. The six humans continued rushing by them until they finally reached the store. The Autobots gathered around in a protective circle. Unfortunately, there was little time to relax as a second wave of Decepticons were
coming in. This time, Blackout along with Brawl and Stockade were leading it.

"We have a second wave incoming. Get your weapons ready, Autobots. We have to hold this position until Optimus and the others arrive," ordered Jazz.

Several Eurofighter Typhoon Tranche 2s flew overhead before transforming on the top of some nearby buildings. The 26-foot Alpha-Class Vehicons were about to fire before being destroyed by multiple Maverick AGM-65E Air-to-Surface Missiles.

Flying in were the Aerialbots. Breakaway transformed and brought out his left forearm-mounted Fusion Beam Sniper Rifle, taking down more Alpha-Class Vehicons from afar. Meanwhile, Air Raid transformed into his 21-foot biped form and fired his right forearm-mounted Double-Barrel Scatter Blaster, destroying several Trax Drones before shifting back into his alt-mode. Silverbolt, in his 22-foot biped form, landed between several Trax Drones. But before they could react, the Aerialbot Leader brought out his Electrostatic Discharger Rifle and with several shots, discharged 150,000 volts of electricity into the drones’ systems, frying them from the inside out.

"Hope we're not too late for the party," said Silverbolt.

"Well, you three missed the first part. But your entrance makes up for it," teased Jazz.

"Good to know," replied Silverbolt as he spotted more Alpha-Class Vehicons flying towards them. "Leave the aerial forces to us. That should give you guys some breathing room," he said before transforming back into his alt-mode.

"Appreciate it, Silverbolt!" yelled Jazz as the Aerialbots flew off.

Back on the ground, the drones had begun firing on the Autobots as the battle resumed once more. Ironhide was separated from the others when Brawl and two Trax Drones attacked him. He managed to rip the helm off of one drone and blew apart the other with his dual Ion Pulse Cannons. Ironhide then focused his attention on Brawl, as said 'Con was firing his right forearm-mounted AZP-23 Amur Quad-Barrel Autocannon at him. The Autobot Heavy Weapons Specialist brushed off the 23x152mm B API-T rounds and fired back, striking Brawl in the lower chassis and sent him crashing into a nearby wall. The black mech was about to rejoin the others when more drones blocked his path.

On their left, Jazz and the femmes were using nearby support pillars and buildings for cover while blasting back any 'Cons that were out in the open. That tactic was working at the moment, keeping the drones away from the humans. Any Trax Drone or Vehicon that got too close were dealt with by both Bumblebee and Jolt in melee-combat. Stockade also got into the fight, assisting the drones by firing his dual Scatter Blasters before being forced to take cover by the femmes shooting at him. Skids and Mudflap decided to climb up the nearby overpass and fire their Photon LMGs from above.

To their right, Hound remained beside the store that the humans had taken shelter in. He managed to destroy several Trax Drones with one of his Ion Tactical Quad-Barrel Shotguns before running out of ammo. Growling, the Commando shoved into a charging Trax Drone's chassis before pulling out his other shotgun. Like before, he fired wildly and shooting down any Trax Drones that got too close until his weapon ran empty. "We're getting flanked! They're pouring in like Insecticons!" yelled Hound as he pulled out one of his Ion Assault Rifles. "Give me a servo here, Cade! I need some damn support here!"

Hearing the Commando's words, Cade immediately smashed some glass windows in the store that he and his group were in before leveling his Battle Rifle-Dagger and firing. His first target was a Trax Drone trying to attack Hound from behind. He fired an energy bolt that struck it in the upper left leg,
causing it to hit the ground before Cade finished it off with a shot to the helm.

"Haha! Nice one, Cade!" complimented the Commando as he fired his Ion Assault Rifle and destroyed another Trax Drone. Picking up a nearby van, Hound used it as a shield while shooting back. Soon, he ran out of ammo and used his empty weapon to knock a Trax Drone back before impaling it. "They're starting to hit us from above!" shouted the Commando as he pulled out his other Ion Assault Rifle. Firing wildly, Hound shot down a Trax Drone that tried to tackle him before throwing the van he was using as a shield at another Trax Drone.

Suddenly, Hound was hit in the back by a plasma bolt and sent him flying into a nearby support pillar, sending nearby cars flying as well. The attack also caused him to lose his assault rifle, though fortunately, Hound had an Ion Battle Pistol with him. "Come on, ya bitches! You're all going to die!" roared the Commando as he continued firing.

Several HE and AP shells flew by, destroying nearby Trax Drones. Running up to Hound was Ironhide, who managed to get pass Brawl. "Get up, Hound! We need to fall back to the shop!" shouted the Heavy Weapons Specialist as he helped the Commando to his pedes. Together, the two of them regrouped with the others just as a third wave of Trax Drones and Vehicons came pouring in. Picking up one of his discarded Ion Assault Rifles, Hound fired back along with his Ion Battle Pistol as Ironhide was now wielding both of his Heavy Iron Rifles.

Back with the others, Jolt fired his EMP Battle Pistol at Stockade, forcing the 'Con to take cover as more drones came in to give him assistance. Deploying his dual Electro-Whips, the Autobot Junior Medic grabbed the chestplates of a Gamma-Class Vehicon before ripping it out and knocked another drone off its pedes. Meanwhile, Bumblebee smashed his left fist into a Trax Drone's faceplates and tearing it off before firing his Solar Plasma Cannon at another drone, blowing a hole through its chestplates. Jazz spotted a Trax Drone trying to attack 'Bee from the left side. Picking up a nearby manhole cover, the Saboteur tossed it like a frisbee and decapitated the drone.

Skids and Mudflap jumped off the overpass they were on and landed on a nearby Trax Drone. They began punching it repeatedly before Mudflap tore its helm off. Another drone tried to shoot them, but got shot between the optics by Cade instead. "This is getting crazy!" shouted Skids as he fired his Photon LMG, destroying a Zeta-Class Vehicon.

"Yeah, but these drones die easily, man! No joke!" added Mudflap as he joined his twin.

Indeed, the Trax Drones were much less durable than the Vehicons. But as time went on, their numbers were beginning to overwhelm the Autobots. The third wave was nearly destroyed, but they were soon reinforced by two more waves containing Alpha and 24-foot Epsilon-Class Vehicons. Rockets, bullets and energy-based projectiles were flying all over the place as the Decepticons began to slowly push the Autobots back. Furthermore, they were running low on ammo, and were now resorting to either melee-combat or using whatever they could find to use as makeshift weapons.

"They're trying to box us in!" shouted Arcee as she fired her Photon Cannon. Her shot knocked down a Trax Drone and then she finished it off with one to the helm.

"Doesn't matter! We must hold the line! Optimus will be here soon!" ordered Jazz, who was using his Crescent Shield Cannon as a makeshift club, bashing drones aside or tearing through their armor.

Elita destroyed another Trax Drone before spotting more running towards them. "Another wave incoming!"

"I got them!" shouted Hound as he ran up to her before pulling out two Mk2 Anti-Personnel-Fragmentation Grenades from his person. "Frag out!" yelled the Commando as he threw them. The
projectiles exploded 4-5 seconds later, destroying one Trax Drone and blowing away two more. Nearby, Bumblebee had gotten tangled up in close-quarters with Stinger. The two were either hitting one another with their fists or firing their Solar Plasma Cannons.

Ironhide, who had both of his Heavy Iron Rifles on his back to cool down from overheating, went back to using his dual forearm-mounted Ion Pulse Cannons. He was blasting Trax Drones left and right, before a 25-foot Beta-Class Vehicon grabbed him from behind. It started to squeeze him, but Ironhide managed to fight back by slamming the Vehicon into a nearby building. The 'Con's grip loosened, allowing the Heavy Weapons Specialist to get free. The black mech then rammed both of his fists into the Vehicon's chestplates before violently pulling out wires and gears. Then Ironhide picked up a fallen lamppost and threw it at a Trax Drone who was about to fire its Solar Plasma Cannon at him. The makeshift javelin skewered the drone through the chestplates, offlineing it instantly.

"Is everyone still online?!" shouted Ironhide.

Hound, now without ammo, pushed an arch on top of some Trax Drones. "We're still good, but we're starting to run low on ammo!" yelled the Commando as he got into a fistfight with a 24-foot purple-grayish two-helm drone that resembled Shockwave. Near him, Cade was still firing his Battle Rifle-Dagger, shooting down any Trax Drone or Vehicon that came into his line of vision. "They're going to overrun us!"

(Back with Megatron...)

Several blocks away, the Decepticon Leader watched as his army began to slowly tire the Autobots out. The Trax Drones and Vehicons were proving quite useful in swarming tactics, though the drones from KSI were much less skilled than the Vehicons. Still, it was only a matter of time until the Autobots ran out of weapons and ammo to fight back. "Blackout, regroup with Brawl and Stockade. Organize the final assault wave and attack while the Autobots are still dealing with the fourth and fifth waves. They're nearly at their limit, finish them off!"

"Understood, my Lord," replied Blackout.

Suddenly, Dreadwing's voice shouted through the comms: "Lord Megatron! Our rear guard units are being wiped out!"

Surprised, the former Lord High Protector snarled out: "What?! Who could possibly be attacking us from the rear?!"

Megatron's answer came in the form of a deafening roar.

(Three Natural Bridges, Wulong Karst, 30 minutes earlier...)

The dual between Optimus and Grimlock had been going on for sometime. Despite his huge size and the range of his melee-based weapons, the Knight couldn't land a single hit on the young Prime. Optimus was moving too fast for him to strike, and yet neither of them was willing to give in.

"Listen to me, Grimlock! You cannot face this threat alone!" shouted Optimus as he tried to convince the Knight.

"No! We are strong! Stronger than you!" roared Grimlock as he swung his Cybertanium Mace again, only for the Autobot Leader to duck.

Optimus growled out in frustration at his opponent's stubbornness and charged forward. "Your pride
and anger has blinded you, Grimlock! Wake up and realize that only together can we survive!"
shouted the Prime as he jumped and delivered a strong punch to said Knight's faceplates.

Grimlock staggered back a little as he lost his grip on his mace before spitting out globs of Energon,
but it wasn't enough to beat him. As Grimlock swung his Energon Flail to push Optimus back, he
then began to transform, but what he changed into was something that none of the Autobots were
expecting. Instead of a Cybertronian-based alt-mode, Grimlock took the form of a 63-foot
horned *Tyrannosaurus Rex!* In his new form, the Knight let out a mighty roar while spewing a
stream of flames from his mouthplates.

"Oh no..." moaned Crosshairs as he backed up even further.

"That...was unexpected," commented Sideswipe.

Drift's optics shuddered as he took the image in. "I was expecting a giant car," said the Samurai 'Bot.

"Me too," added Mirage.

Optimus frowned as he stared at his opponent. Then he got into a stance with his Vector Shield-
Cannon in front of him. "$I see now that my words will not reach you, Grimlock. And so I will
communicate with you in a way that you do understand: brute force!" he declared.

Grimlock let out another roar and charged. As he did, he let loose another torrent of flames at
Optimus, causing the Prime to raise his Vector Shield-Cannon to protect him against the oncoming
fire. Even then, the Autobot Leader could feel the searing heat threatening to melt him, and it was
only with both great endurance and willpower did Optimus came out of it unscathed. By then
Grimlock was nearly upon him, mouthplates open and fanged dentas ready to tear the young Prime
apart. But rather than submit, Optimus let out a war cry as he swung his Vector Shield-Cannon, with
great strength, against the left side of Grimlock's faceplates.

The impact stunned the large Knight and sent him crashing onto the ground, kicking up huge chunks
of dirt and grass in the process. The other Knights did nothing but merely stood at where they were.
Likewise, the Autobots also remained at where they were, waiting to see what their leader would do
next.

Calmly approaching his still-downed opponent, who was releasing growls, Optimus Prime pinned
Grimlock down by pushing his own weight down on him with a single pede. Using the Sword of
Judgement, Optimus placed it close to the Knight's left optic. "$Now, you will defend my family,"
said the Prime as he slid the blade across Grimlock's left cheekplate and creating a series of sparks
before he added grimly: "Or die."

Grimlock was quiet for a moment. After what seemed like an eternity, did his frame relaxed. "$Very
well..." he growled, conceding the match.

Optimus nodded. He then climbed on top of the Knight, allowing Grimlock to stand to his full height
before the Prime turned to face the others. "$Autobots, it is time that we show the universe who we
are! And why we are here!"

Prowl smirked. "$Yes, sir," he replied as he made his way towards the other Knights, followed by the
other four Autobots.

Crosshairs just sighed before commenting: "$Ugh, seriously, you just want to die for the guy. That's
either leadership or maybe brainwashing."

"No," corrected Drift as he smiled at his leader. Even Grimlock seemed invigorated by Optimus'
charismatic speech by letting out a mighty roar. "That's Optimus Prime."

The other Knights transformed as well. Swoop took to the air as a Pteranodon with a 53-foot wingspan. Scorn transformed into a 59-foot Spinosaurus as he let Crosshairs climb onto him. Next was Slug, who became a 40-foot Triceratops, with Drift sitting behind his large frill. Prowl mounted Slash, who turned into a 47-foot Velociraptor. Mirage got on top of Sludge, who transformed into a 61-foot Brontosaurus, while Sideswipe sat on Snarl as he became a 59-foot Stegosaurus.

With the Autobots on their mounts and the Knights ready, Optimus raised the Sword of Judgement. "Now, as one, we charge together! Let's roll out!" he declared as they took off.

Time seemed to move quickly as the six large Cyber-Dinosaurs charged through the valley, plus one flyer. In just a few short minutes, they had already entered the forest and could see Hong Kong. They could also see the smoke rising from the city, along with hearing the sounds of gunfire and explosions in the distance. Above the buildings were multiple Alpha-Class Vehicons squaring off against the Aerialbots. "Silverbolt, do you read me? We're coming in from the mountains," said Optimus through the comms.

"Optimus, is that you? And what in the name of Primus are you riding?" asked Silverbolt, with surprise evident in his voice.

"No time to explain. What's the situation there?" ordered the Autobot Leader.

"Air Raid, Breakaway and I are pretty much dominating the battle in the air. But the others are pinned down and are getting close to being overrun," reported the Autobot flyer. "From up here, it looks like you'll be attacking the Decepticons' rear."

"Then that's where we'll start! CHARGE!!" ordered Optimus. Grimlock let out a roar as he entered the city's outskirts. Before them were several Trax Drones that were clearly surprised by the large Knight's presence.

They had no time to react, though, as Grimlock and the Prime were quickly upon them. Optimus would brutally bash/shoot them with his Vector Shield-Cannon, or impale/slice the drones with the Sword of Judgement. Grimlock instead would crush them with his mighty jaws, stomp the drones with his clawed pedes, smack them aside with his tail, or melt their chassis' with his flames. Behind them, the rest of the Autobots and Knights followed.

The group soon went deeper into the city, laying waste to any Trax Drone or Vehicon in their path, while remarkably, avoiding any humans. Crosshairs jumped off of Scorn, firing his dual Ion Machine Pistols while the Knight did a role and impaled any Decepticon with his spiked sail or simply crushing them. Slug simply charged forward like a battering ram, crushing any drone by either his pedes or skewering them against his horns. Drift had his dual Cybertanium Katanas out and was cutting down any Decepticon that tried to attack Slug from the sides and back. Any drone that tried to attack from high positions were thwarted by Sludge and Mirage. The Knight would use his long neck to grab any Trax Drone, either crushing them with his jaws or simply tossing them aside. Mirage was firing his Photon SMG, gunning down any 'Con that was unfortunate to be in the range of his weapon. Snarl would smash or smack aside any drone in his path while Sideswipe fired his dual Fusion Pulse Pistols. The Decepticons tried to shoot the Frontliner, but Snarl's upright armor plating protected the silver Autobot from their projectiles. Coming up from behind them, Slash and Prowl used a stealthier approach. Any drone that was focused on their comrades were swiftly torn apart by either the Knight's fanged dentas and claws or blown apart by Prowl's Neutron SMG. From above, Swoop would either fire energy bolts from his beak or would grab drones with his clawed talons before dropping them from a high altitude. Others he would knock over with his twin 30-foot long tails.
It was a complete massacre for the Decepticons. No matter what they tried, they were no match for the combined might of the Autobots and the Knights of Cybertron.

(Back with Megatron...)

From his position, the Decepticon Leader watched the whole thing with growing anger. "No, no! This can't be happening! How can this be happening?! They're ruining everything!" he roared.

A stray shot hit Megatron in the right shoulder, making him stumble a bit. Dreadwing suddenly landed beside his leader as the 28-foot bluish-grey one-optic Seeker came to his side. "My Lord, this isn't a secured position! You must move to a safer location!" said Dreadwing.

"I will not retreat without the Seed!" snarled Megatron.

"The human-made drones are lost, sir. But we still have plenty of Vehicons, though, to assist in the Seed's retrieval. Starscream and the Seekers are also coming to reinforce us," explained Dreadwing. "But if you are offlined here, the Decepticon cause will die here as well."

Megatron growled again. Nevertheless, he conceded to his subordinate's argument. With Dreadwing covering him, the Decepticon Leader moved away to a more secured location.

(Back with Jazz's group...)

The Autobots were still holding their own, but only barely. Dozens of destroyed Trax Drones and Vehicons laid on the streets, but more kept on coming. Bumblebee was still in a wrestling match with Stinger and was further away from the others. Hound had managed to defeat the Two-Helm Drone, his Cybertanium Combat Knife was in his opponent's left helm while his right one had been blown apart. The exhausted Commando was leaning against a building while firing his Ion Battle Pistol. The Chevy Twins had latched onto Brawl, banging against the larger 'Con relentlessly while avoiding Brawl's clawed servos at the same time. Jazz and Jolt were in a firefight against Blackout, with neither side giving ground. Arcee and her two older sisters had taken cover near the shop, shooting at Stockade and some Zeta-Class Vehicons along with Cade. Ironhide was literally tearing apart drones with his servos, having no time at all to use his weapons in close-quarters. His black armor was covered in multiple scratches and burn marks.

When all seemed lost, it was Hound who first heard the roar. Adjusting his optics, the Commando spotted someone that made him cheer. "Its Optimus! Optimus is here!"

Everyone else stopped fighting as they watched Grimlock jump over a pile of wrecked cars near where Bumblebee and Stinger were still fighting it out. With a roar, the Knight let loose a torrent of flames that melted any nearby Trax Drones and forcing Stinger to jump off its Autobot counterpart.

"ATTACK!!" roared Optimus as the others arrived, spreading out to help their comrades while cutting swathes through the Decepticon ranks.

Seeing their leader reignited the Autobots' strength. They soon began pushing back the remaining Decepticons with renewed vigor. With enemy reinforcements here and their morale restored, Blackout, Brawl, Stockade and the Vehicons immediately retreated, leaving the Trax Drones to cover them.

Back with Bumblebee, the yellow mech saw Stinger and three Trax Drones charging at him. Fortunately, Swoop arrived, hovering over 'Bee with his clawed talons wrapping around his shoulders. As he was lifted into the air, Bumblebee fired his Solar Plasma Cannon at the 'Cons, destroying the three Trax Drones easily. But Stinger, however, managed to dodge them and grabbed
onto 'Bee's pedes. Even as Swoop flew higher into the sky, the two mechs continued their match on top of the Knight, who tried to shake Stinger off him.

The next minute or so consisted of Bumblebee and Stinger punching, kicking and shooting at each other. All the while trying not to fall off the robotic *Pteranodon*. Their fight was making it increasingly difficult for Swoop to fly properly. Eventually, Stinger had managed to pin Bumblebee down and wrapped his claw-shaped Solar Plasma Cannon around the Scout's neck. Just as it seemed that the Bumblebee doppelganger would offline the yellow mech, Swoop slammed against a nearby building, causing Stinger to lose its hold. Seeing an opening, Bumblebee brought his battlemask down before ramming his Solar Plasma Cannon into his counterpart's chassis. With a powerful blast, Stinger's frame was blown into a hundred pieces.

Swoop had managed to land safely on the ground before letting Bumblebee get off. Stinger's remains rained down around them as 'Bee skillfully caught his doppelganger's severed helm without looking. "Like I said before: I hate cheap knockoffs," he said through the radio before giving the helm to Swoop to chew on.

A few minutes later, all of the remaining Trax Drones were destroyed as the Autobots secured the area. Still riding Grimlock, Optimus looked at the others. "Prowl, Crosshairs, take the Knights and secure the perimeter. Sideswipe, I want you and Mirage to check on the others. Drift, find a vehicle for the humans to use. Once everyone is accounted for, we're moving out."

As said Autobots carried out his orders, Jazz and Elita approached Optimus. Seeing his sparkmate in one piece made the Autobot Leader's optics soften. "Are you okay?"

The purple femme nodded. "We'll be fine, I thought we were done for."

Optimus then turned to Jazz. "What's the damage?"

"We're all good. Nothing major, Prime-O," reported the Saboteur as he looked at the others. Ironhide was helping Hound up while Jolt was checking the Commando's status. Chromia and Mirage were gathering all of Hound's weapons that were scattered across the area. No point in leaving them to let a human bystander find them. Arcee was embracing Bumblebee, who just came back with Swoop. Sideswipe was currently trying to breakup a fight between Skids and Mudflap as they were bickering on who got the most kills. "We should be able to move in a little bit."

"Good, this isn't secured. I'll have the Aerialbots fly ahead to find a secure route for us to take where we can wait for the Ark," said Optimus. That's when he noticed the humans approaching him. Most of them were covered in dirt, especially Cade, but otherwise seemed perfectly okay. The Prime, however, frowned when he spotted Joshua in the group.

"T-that was amazing!" said Joshua as he and the others walked up to Optimus and Grimlock. "Awesome work!"

"You!" exclaimed Optimus as he pointed the tip of the Sword of Judgement at Joyce, who flinched back in surprise. "It is both yours and Cemetery Wind's actions that will be responsible for the near-extinction of your race!"

Hands raised, the CEO of KSI tried to defend himself. "Look, I can tell that you're still upset over the whole bioethical dilemma, along with what happened to your friends. And I understand that now, because I too would also be mad if something like that happened to me. So how-"

"Maybe all he wants to hear from you is that some things should never have been invented at all," interrupted Cade.
To prove the inventor's point, Grimlock let out a mighty roar right in front of Joshua's face, causing the man to let out a scream as the roar's vibrations nearly knocked him off his feet.

Once that was done, Optimus contacted the others. "Silverbolt, how does it look from the sky?"

"It seems like most of the Decepticons are regrouping north of the city, but I can't tell yet if they're preparing to launch a counterattack or if they're falling back. However, the south part is clear, and I can see a bridge that will lead you out of the city and back towards the mountains," reported the Aerialbot Leader.

"Very good. Keep us covered and report on any new developments," ordered Optimus before switching comm frequencies. "Ratchet, do you read me?"

"Ah, finally," exclaimed the Autobot Chief Medical Officer. "We were having trouble contacting you, Optimus."

"What's your situation?" asked the Prime.

"The Ark is fully repaired and took off sometime ago. We're currently flying over the South China Sea, and by my calculations, we should be at your position in an hour and thirty minutes at least," reported Ratchet.

"Good to hear. Prime out," said Optimus. "Drift!"

"I found a vehicle, sir," reported the Samurai 'Bot. Beside him was a blue SUV.

"Good work. Humans, get into the vehicle. We'll escort you safely to the mountains. It's imperative that we get the Seed out of the city before the Decepticons launch a counterattack," explained Optimus as the Autobots and Knights prepared to move out.

(Meanwhile...) Parked on a nearby hill that overlooked a good part of the city was a black van. In it were Harold Attinger and James Savoy. Currently, the ex-Cemetery Wind Field Commander was checking on the G36KV Assault Carbine that he took off from a dead officer from the Hong Kong Police Force's Special Duties Unit who was killed by one of the Trax Drones, while Harold was looking through a pair of high-powered binoculars as he watched Cade and the others got inside the blue SUV and took off with the Autobots and Knights surrounding them. The disavowed CIA agent growled as he realized that the situation had gotten a lot more complicated.

"Now what?" asked James. "There's no way we can grab the Seed with the Autobots protecting them.

Suddenly, a beeping sound could be heard from Attinger's coat pocket. Surprised at first, the ex-Director of Cemetery Wind fished out an alien comms device. Pressing a button, a familiar voice with a British-accent spoke through it.

"Where's my bounty, Attinger?" demanded Lockdown.

Harold realized the Bounty Hunter had return to recapture Optimus. At that moment, a sinister smile formed on both his and Savoy's faces. With Lockdown here, getting the Seed would be much easier. "Prime's here, in Hong Kong," replied James.

"Do what you have to do," added Attinger.
High above Hong Kong, Lockdown's ship began its descent through the upper atmosphere. The Bounty Hunter watched from the bridge's viewport as the city came into view.

"I intend too," replied Lockdown in a venomous tone.

In this altered take, Swoop has ONE helm instead of two when he transforms into his Pteranodon form.

Oh, boy. The Autobots have managed to beat back the Decepticons, but now Lockdown has returned to Earth and with a vengeance. Next chapter is the final part of the grand battle. Be sure to review or leave a comment!
The Grand Battle Part 3

Chapter Notes

Here we go, the last chapter for the grand battle and one more before the end of this story, enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

(Back in Hong Kong...)

Few minutes after the battle, the Autobots were now driving through the city, with the Knights running alongside them. The Aerialbots and Swoop flew in the air above them. In between the group was the blue SUV carrying the humans. Inside, Shane was driving said vehicle with Cade riding shotgun in the front passenger seat. Behind them and sitting in the back seats were Tessa and Joshua, with the Seed on the latter's lap. And sitting in the very back was Su and Darcy. Despite the lack of attacks, everyone in the SUV was tense. There was no telling what might happen next, as they weren't out of danger yet. And that's when the Seed suddenly moved and began blinking a blue-colored light.

The humans gasped as the action unnerved them. "What did you just do?" asked Cade, looking at Joshua.

Said man raised his hands defensively. "I didn't do anything, but it's clearly an issue."

"Did you press a button?" asked Cade.

"Don't tell me it's going to detonate!" said Su.

"Is it going to detonate?" asked Tessa.

Joshua looked at them. "I don't know," he replied as he was starting to get annoyed.

Cade wasn't convinced. "Well, you must've pressed something, because it wouldn't be beeping right now."

"Is it going to detonate?" asked Darcy.

"I don't know!" shouted Joshua as he was losing his temper due to their constant questions.

"Well, what do you know?" demanded Cade. "Because when a bomb starts beeping, that means something is happening or will happen."

Calming down, Joshua replied: "Look, all I know is that it's a steady, blinking blue light. And that could mean a lot of things, like a timer counting down, or..." he paused as a very uncomfortable feeling began to fill him. "Or it's transmitting its GPS coordinates."

The whole SUV went silent after that. For some reason, it felt a lot more worse than being a timer. It was Cade who asked the question: "To whom?"

(Bridge, The Knight's Ship)
Up ahead, near the Tsing Ma Bridge that the Autobots were moving towards, the Knight's Ship had finally reached Hong Kong. Hovering above the waterfront, Lockdown looked down at Hong Kong with disdain. "Have we located Prime?" demanded the Bounty Hunter.

"Yes, sir. He and the Seed are right next to each other. But we're also picking up multiple Autobot signatures, including the other Knights," reported one of his underlings.

"Activate the magnet. We'll swallow them all up," ordered Lockdown.

(Back with the Autobots...)

Driving through Victoria Harbor, it was Bumblebee who spotted the Tsing Ma Bridge.

"Optimus, I see the bridge up ahead and—what the scrap?!!" exclaimed the yellow mech through the radio.

Coming into visual, the Autobots, Knights and humans watched as a large amount of debris, vehicles and other metal-like substances were all being pulled upwards into the air. Looking even higher, they could see the Knight's Ship, and with a very large magnet underneath it. Suddenly, all of the metal was released, allowing it to fall back down and nearly hitting the group. Around them, pedestrians were fleeing for their lives as they tried to avoid being crushed to death by the falling debris.

"Ah, slag! It's like Devastator all over again!" shouted Mudflap as he and his twin watched the whole thing.

"Fall back! Fall back now or will be sucked up too!" ordered Optimus. "Aerialbots, stay away from that ship or else you will get caught in the magnetic pull!"

"Roger that, Prime!" exclaimed Silverbolt.

"Like we needed to be told twice!" commented Air Raid as the three Autobot flyers flew away.

Meanwhile, Shane had put the SUV in full-reverse as he tried to create as much distance as he could from the magnet, while trying to avoid getting hit by falling debris and running over nearby pedestrians at the same time. The other Autobots and Knights kept on driving/running as well. Optimus and Ironhide, who were at the front, transformed into their biped forms. The two Autobots were running as fast as they could, while blasting or pushing back any large objects that fell near them. Soon, the nearby ships in the harbor were also being pulled up into the air by the magnet before being dropped, creating massive waves that almost knocked Ironhide and Optimus off their pedes. Fortunately, the two mechs were able to recover quickly and continued moving.

Ironhide looked at the Knight's Ship and then at Optimus. "Prime, that fragger won't stop until he has us! We need to blast that thing!" he shouted.

"I know, Ironhide! But its too far out of range and all of this falling debris is making it difficult to aim properly!" replied Optimus. "Just keep moving, Autobots!"

That's when Silverbolt came in through the comms: "Optimus, we may not be able to destroy the magnet, but we can still get Lockdown's attention! That should give you and the others plenty of time to escape!"

The three Aerialbots flew towards the Knight's Ship before launching a wave of AIM-120C-7 AMRAAMs (Advanced-Medium-Range-Air-to-Air-Missiles) at said vessel, causing multiple explosions.
Nearby Cybertronian Mercenaries were either blown back by the impacts or almost knocked off the ship itself. Even from where Lockdown stood, the shockwaves from the explosions could still be felt. "Status!"

"Minimal damage, sir. Came from three Cybertronian flyers. Both the shields and thrusters are still operational," reported a nearby Merc. "But the magnet is using too much energy, and we won't be able to repel attacks like those constantly."

"The Aerialbots, huh? That probably explains how Prime escaped in the first place. Dispatch Orbital Assault Fighters and shut down the magnet for now. I want one group keeping the Aerialbots busy while the second group searches for Optimus!" growled out Lockdown.

In another part of the city and overlooking from a hill, the Decepticon Leader and his remaining forces in the area were watching Lockdown's ship. Also present with Megatron besides Blackout, Brawl, Stockade, Starscream, Dreadwing and the Seekers, were Divebomb, Overcast and Jetstorm. Divebomb was a 27-foot yellow and green Seeker, whose alt-mode was an Su-35BM. Overcast was a 26-foot black and yellow one-optic Seeker who transforms into a F-5E Tiger II. Jetstorm was the tallest Decepticon there, even towering over Blackout and Starscream. He was a 49-foot white and grey mech that turned into a An-225-100 Mriya.

"It appears that Lockdown has returned to retrieve Prime," noted Stockade. "And is going through extreme lengths to do it."

"I don't care about the Bounty Hunter or Optimus," growled out Megatron. "Its the Seed that I want right now. With the Autobots' attention fixed on Lockdown, it will be much easier for us to retrieve it. Seekers, head out and locate the device immediately."

"Are you insane, Megatron?!" protested Starscream. "If we go out there, with that giant magnet still operational, we'll be sucked up too!"

Despite being one-foot shorter than the Decepticon Air Commander, Megatron still displayed his amazing strength when he suddenly grabbed Starscream by the neck and lifted him up, causing his pedes to dangle in the air. The Decepticon Leader's red optics glared at his subordinate with unrestrained fury. "Or would you rather have to deal with me instead?" snarled Megatron before he tossed Starscream aside. "Now, get moving!"

The Seekers transformed and took off, with Starscream following right behind them. Blackout approached his master. "My Lord, what about us? Surely we can be of use."

"You and the others will remain on standby, Blackout. Shockwave had just recently informed me that the Ark is currently inbound from the U.S," replied Megatron. "We can't risk anymore Autobots interfering with us. Our ground troops will remain here for now until I give them new orders. Understood?"

"Yes, my Lord," replied Brawl, Blackout and Stockade.

Cade had no idea how far Shane had done reverse-driving, but eventually, Lockdown's ship had moved away and no longer focused on them. That gave the young man the time to turn around and
drive properly now.

"Looks like we lost him," said Tessa.

"And we got separated from the Autobots too," added Cade as he was looking out the front windshield, watching as the citizens of Hong Kong were moving about as they tried to make sense of what was happening in their city. "We gotta find them before someone else does."

Suddenly, as if the entire universe was playing a cruel joke on them, the sound of gunfire caught their attention. It was soon followed by 5.56x45mm NATO FMJ rounds hitting the back window of their SUV. Looking through the rear-view mirror, Cade saw a black van ganging up on them. Sticking out through the van's front passenger side door and firing a G36KV Assault Carbine at them was James Savoy.

"Shit, it's Attinger!" cursed Joshua as he ducked his head.

Shane immediately tried to lose their pursuers, but Harold was staying hot on their heels. All the while, Savoy continued shooting at them, only pausing when he had to reload.

"Where the bloody hell did he get an assault carbine?!" yelled Darcy as the whole back window shattered.

"The Hong Kong Police Force's Special Duties Unit uses them. Must've taken one of them off a dead officer," answered Su as she covered her head.

"Great to know, but how do we stop them?" demanded Tessa as the bullets kept flying. Around them, people were moving out of the way as they didn't want to get run over or be shot.

Acting on instinct, Cade smashed out the passenger side window before carefully raising his Battle Rifle-Dagger and sticking it outside the SUV, all the while trying to aim at the chasing van. James saw this and fired at him, trying to hit Cade. However, Shane's driving made it difficult for that, but also made it more harder for Cade to shoot back. The older Yeager kept on firing his Cybertronian weapon when he managed to land a direct hit. The first shot hit one of the front wheels before three more hit the engine, causing smoke to rise out of the hood as Attinger lost control of the van. Unfortunately, Savoy had managed to hit the left back tire of the SUV. Soon both vehicles went out of control, with Shane's SUV hitting a nearby wall head-on while Attinger's van did a flip before skidding across the ground.

A few seconds later, Cade had managed to get his door open before staggering out of the damaged SUV. The others did the same. Coughing a bit, Cade looked at them. "Everyone okay?"

"I'm good for now..." muttered Joshua as he rubbed his head with one hand while the other was holding the duffle bag.

Suddenly, bullets soared through the air and just inches away from hitting Cade, almost making him lose his grip on his Battle Rifle-Dagger. Having gotten out of the upside-down van, James resumed firing his G36KV at them. The ex-Cemetery Wind Field Commander's clothes were tattered and dusty, and he had several scratches on the left side of his face. However, Savoy's eyes still held the same fury they always had as he continue to fire his weapon.

Dodging the bullets, Cade took cover behind an overturned dumpster. The others had dove back into the wrecked SUV and pulled their heads down.

A few seconds later, James stopped firing as he took a moment to load a fresh magazine into his G36KV before aiming at Cade, who aimed back at him with his Battle Rifle-Dagger, starting a
Mexican standoff.

"It's over, Yeager," said Savoy. "Your Autobot friends aren't here to save you this time. Now, hand over the Seed, and I might let you and the others live."

"Even if I wanted to give it to you, which I won't, what can you and Attinger do now?" retorted Cade. "Joshua told me what happened, Cemetery Wind is done, finished! You and your boss are now-wanted war criminals. And besides, are you two completely oblivious of what's been happening around you?! What your actions have caused?! Those drones, the same drones that KSI made for you guys, nearly wiped out this city and tried to take the Seed to Megatron, who played you all from the start. Did you even know that if he got it, Megatron would've been able to rebuild his army and wipe out humanity? It would've been on both you and Attinger's head, Savoy!"

"People make mistakes, Yeager. Like when both you and your daughter made the same mistake by trusting those aliens and betraying your race," replied James.

"That has nothing to do with this! Do you even care of what's happening around you?! Or that Lockdown almost took Adam, your only living relative, as some kind of prize?!" demanded Cade.

That made Savoy pause momentarily before he quickly stoned his face. "I just wished he'd taken the brat away with him. If it were me, I'd just kill him because he's the reason why my sister is dead!" he shouted as he prepared to pull the trigger.

At that moment, an Energon Crossbow/Battle-Axe flew past James, cutting the assault carbine in half as the hybrid weapon embedded itself into the concrete. Shocked, both men turned to see Adam Nova standing in a nearby alleyway, with his hands out. Cade was the first to recover by quickly reaming his weapon at Savoy and fired, just as the ex-Cemetery Wind Field Commander pulled out his P30 Pistol. It took one energy bolt to not only kill the man, but also sent him several feet back before hitting the ground, hard. "And by the way, that was for Lucas," said Cade to the now-deceased James Savoy.

With the threat gone, the others came out of the SUV, while Adam and Rewind approached them, with the former retrieving his weapon. Tessa immediately ran up to her father and embraced him, with Cade hugging her back. However, the elder Yeager noticed Adam's eyes on his uncle's corpse. There was no expression on his face, just a stoic look.

Walking up to the teen, Cade put a hand on Adam's left shoulder. "You okay, kid?"

"I'm fine," said Adam as he turned around without giving his uncle's dead body another glance. The group of humans, plus one Autobot, headed off to find the others. However, none of them noticed a hand coming out of the driver's side of the wrecked black van.

(Back with the Autobots...)

The ones on the ground had managed to shake Lockdown, whose focus had shifted towards the Aerialbots. Unfortunately, they had been separated from the humans, who had fled deeper into the city. And now had multiple Orbital Assault Fighters to deal with as said ships flew towards them before firing HEAPT rounds at the Autobots.

"Great, just what we needed! Killers from the sky!" complained Crosshairs as he fired his dual Ion Machine Pistols. Ironhide was beside him, firing his dual forearm-mounted Ion Pulse Cannons as he shot down one fighter out of the sky. "Just keep focusing, Crosshairs! We can't let these slaggers pin us down!"
"Let me at them! I'll have them dropping like Insecticons!" declared Hound as he tried to get up, only to be pushed back down by Jolt. The Junior Medic had placed the Commando behind a building for cover.

"You're not doing any fighting until we get to a secure place. You've taken too much damage from those KSI drones and you don't even have any ammo left for your weapons. So, you're staying put!" ordered Jolt as he fired his EMP Battle Pistol at the fighters.

Slug came charging through and performed a jump, grabbing an Orbital Assault Fighter that was flying by. Tearing off a thruster, the fighter was sent crashing into the ground. The other Autobots and Knights were also doing their best to take down the fighters. However, many of them were still damaged from the previous fight and were running low on ammo. Those with melee weapons were also of no help, due to the fighters being out of range. Thus, the ones with ranged weapons had the responsibility of protecting their comrades. Mirage was the only one able to help by dishing out his dual Cybertanium Anchor-Blades and letting them sink into a passing fighter before pulling it apart, causing it to crash violently.

During the firefight, Optimus noticed that they were missing some members in their group as he fired his Vector Shield-Cannon at a fighter, damaging an engine. "Where are the humans?!"

Prowl was next to Bumblebee, as said Scout was firing his Solar Plasma Cannon at the fighters. "I don't know, sir! We lost track of them when we were falling back from the magnet. So they must be somewhere else in the city," replied Prowl.

And that's when something crashed beside them, kicking up cement, dirt, metal and dust. When the dust settled, the fallen object was none other than Breakaway, who looked beaten up and had sparks flying off his armor. "Ugh, those cannons sure do pack a punch," he muttered.

"You okay, Breakaway?" asked Optimus as 'Bee helped the Aerialbot up and moved him to cover.

"I'm still flight-capable, sir. But those turrets on the Knight's Ship are too numerous for me and the others to handle all at once," reported Breakaway while Jolt checked on his injuries.

Suddenly, the comms came to life: "Optimus! Me and Air Raid saw Breakaway go down. Is he...?"

"He's okay, Silverbolt," replied Optimus. "What's your status?"

"We're fine, Optimus. But we can't keep Lockdown distracted for long. He's slowly making his way towards your position," responded the Aerialbot Leader.

Suddenly, a large shadow engulfed the Autobots. Looking up, Optimus saw the Knight's Ship right above them. Before he could give an order, the ship's magnet was activated again. This time, the Autobots had no chance of getting away as they felt themselves being pulled up into the air.

"EVERYBODY HOLD ONTO SOMETHING!!" yelled Prowl as he grabbed onto a nearby building. Near him, Jazz and Bumblebee were hanging onto the ground for dear life as they dug their respective digits into the cement. Mudflap and Skids were both holding onto a lamp post, while making sure the other didn't get sucked up. Hound was already being lifted into the air, and would've gone higher if Jolt hadn't wrapped one of his Electro-Whips around the Commando's right pede, while the Junior Medic used the other one to keep himself in place. Crosshairs floated right past them, but he managed to barly grab onto Hound's left shoulder. Mirage did the same by anchoring himself to the ground with his dual Cybertanium Anchor-Blades, while Sideswipe grabbed onto both of the rosso corsa mech's pedes. Arcee, Chromia and Elita also anchored themselves to the ground by using their Energon Blades, while Breakaway and Drift had both managed to transform and took
to the air. Unfortunately, Optimus, Ironhide and the seven Knights were already being pulled up into the air and couldn't hold onto something.

Ironhide had finally managed to grab the edge of a nearby rooftop, but Optimus, Grimlock, Sludge and Scorn floated past him as they were getting closer to the magnet. "Optimus!" shouted the black mech.

"Ironhide! Aim for the magnet! It's the only way to shut it down, and hurry!" shouted Optimus as he tried to fire his Vector Shield-Cannon at said target, with Grimlock roaring in anger as he released a stream of flames as well.

Hearing his old friend's words, Ironhide pulled out his Heavy Iron 1.0 Assault Rifle from his back and let out a war cry as he fired several HE rounds at the magnet. His efforts were rewarded with explosions coming from the Knight's Ship. The magnetic pull that had trapped the group vanished, and the two Autobots and seven Knights found themselves under Earth's gravity again. Optimus and Ironhide gripped a nearby building to slow down their descent as they fell. The Knights, however crashed onto the ground hard, but they didn't seem to be bothered by the impact. Ironhide and Optimus landed beside Grimlock, who was a few blocks away from the others due to being pulled into the air by the magnet.

(Bridge, The Knight's Ship)

Lockdown scowled as multiple screens on nearby consoles were blinking red. "Report!"

"The magnet's been destroyed, sir! Its too heavily-damaged to activate again!" reported a Mercenary. "But all of the ship's other systems remain operational and we're still in the air!"

"Good. Order all of our remaining fighters to launch an all-out airstrike on the Autobots. I don't care if Prime gets hit, but I do want both him and his sparkmate alive. And have a ground team prepared. I will be leading them personally to collect Optimus and his sparkmate, along with eliminating any Autobot survivors," ordered the Bounty Hunter.

Suddenly, several Orbital Assault Fighters were destroyed, followed by multiple explosions rocking the Knight's Ship.

"What the-?!" cried out Lockdown.

(Back in Hong Kong...)

The Autobots and the Knights watched as the Ark appeared overhead. Its Heavy Laser Cannons opened up on the larger vessel. Explosions followed the barrage as smoke began rising from Lockdown's ship as the Ark flew past it. Multiple fighters were shot destroyed by the ship's Heavy Ion FlaK Cannons that were firing Incendiary-Shrapnel rounds from all sides, downing them in an instant. Slowly but surely, the Knight's Ship began to descend, fortunately moving away from the city and towards the water.

"Looks like the others made it," said Ironhide as he watched Lockdown's ship crash into the water. He then frowned when he saw Optimus walking in that direction.

The Autobot Leader had a focused look on his faceplates as he stared at the vessel. Even from their distance, most of the Knight's Ship was still above the water, but was slowly sinking. Adjusting his optics, Optimus watched as a single individual managed to jump out of the sinking ship and onto dry land. The Prime could also make out a very murderous look on the mech's faceplates as his right arm shifted into a menacing hook.
"Lockdown..." muttered Optimus. Pulling out both his Vector Shield-Cannon and the Sword of Judgement, he then looked at both Ironhide and Grimlock, with the latter having just gotten up. "Ironhide, regroup with the others and get the Seed to safety."

The Heavy Weapons Specialist frowned as he realized what his old friend's intentions were right now. "Optimus, you're not thinking of confronting Lockdown by yourself?" asked Ironhide as he too saw the Bounty Hunter escaping his sinking ship. If he had to compare Lockdown with Megatron, 'Hide would say the Bounty Hunter was the greatest threat right now. He was relentless in his work and was known to make things very personal. Lockdown will never stop until his target was captured...or killed. In this case, it was Optimus. Ironhide knew that and so did Prime.

But the problem was Optimus' current situation. The Autobot Leader hadn't fought for three years and had just recently finished a tough battle. Meanwhile, Lockdown was in top-fighting condition and fully-armed. Plus, the Bounty Hunter's obvious rage would give him a boost when in combat. Statistically, Optimus' chances of winning were low.

"I have no choice, old friend. Even without his ship, Lockdown is a bigger threat than Megatron, and he won't stop until he's captured me. The only thing that can solve it is that Lockdown is put down...permanently," replied the Prime as he took off. "Regroup with the others, you two! Protect the Seed!"

Back with the rest of the Autobots, they continued watching as Omega Supreme dominated his opponent, earning cheers from the group.

"Yeah! Omega's back in the house!" cheered Mudflap.

"There you all are!" shouted a voice.

Driving towards the group of Autobots were Cliffjumper, Evac, Leadfoot, Roadbuster, Toppin and Warpath. Evac opened his doors to allow Adam, Rewind, Cade, Tessa, Shane, Joshua, Su and Darcy to get out before transforming into his biped form with the others.

"Did we make it in time?" asked Cliffjumper as he helped up Bumblebee.

"Your timing was perfect, Cliffjumper," replied Prowl. "But where are the others?"

"Ratchet, Wheeljack, Steeljaw and the other Mini-Cons got off at the Three Natural Bridges where the transport ship is now holding the Hatchlings. Currently, Omega is bombarding Lockdown's ship as you can see," explained Cliffjumper. "We also managed to secure a bridge that will lead us out of the city. But we better hurry before the 'Cons find out."

"Wait, where's Optimus?" asked Cade as he noticed that the Autobot Leader wasn't present in their group.

"He's gone off to confront Lockdown," answered Ironhide, who had just arrived with the Knights.

"Ironhide, what do you mean 'he's gone off to fight Lockdown'?" exclaimed Elita as her sister's sparkmate approached them.

"That slagger survived the crash, and Optimus has gone off to finish the Bounty Hunter once and for all. Otherwise, he will never get a moment's peace," explained the black mech.

Elita looked furious. "And you didn't go to help or even tried to stop him?!"

"He wouldn't have listened to me anyway. You know how he's like, Elita," defended Ironhide.
The purple femme said nothing as she instead transformed into her alt-mode and took off in the same direction her sparkmate was in.

"Sister, wait!" shouted Chromia.

"They're both slagging stubborn!" cursed Ironhide. "But, we've got no choice but to trust them. Our main focus right now is getting the Seed somewhere safe."

Tessa and Shane got inside Bumblebee, while Joshua, Darcy and Su went with Drift. However, that's when Adam noticed that someone else was missing. "Where's Cade?"

(With Thundercracker...)

Above the humans, Autobots and Knights, the Decepticon Seeker flew overhead. Having watched the whole thing taking place, Thundercracker zoomed in on Joyce, who was still carrying the black duffle bag that had the Seed in it.

"Lord Megatron, I've located the Seed. Its with the humans, and the Autobots are preparing to move it out of the city. Omega Supreme isn't with them and neither is Optimus, he and his sparkmate have gone off to face Lockdown," reported the Seeker through the comms.

"Excellent. All Seekers, attack the Autobots and retrieve the Seed. I will send our remaining Vehicons in the area to attack Prime while he's distracted with his fight against the Bounty Hunter. I want Optimus' helm, but I also want Lockdown alive. He might prove to be useful," ordered Megatron.

(Back with Optimus...)

Prime had tracked Lockdown's Energon signature towards an abandoned factory near the waterfront. Smoke could still be seen rising from the Knight's Ship as it nearly disappeared beneath the waves. But there was still no sign of the Bounty Hunter.

"Lockdown, show yourself and face me!" challenged Optimus with both his Vector Shield-Cannon and the Sword of Judgement at the ready.

"PRIME!!" shouted the Bounty Hunter from above.

Lockdown jumped down from the factory's rooftop and fired his right forearm-mounted Photon Cannon at a nearby tower, destroying it. Optimus was forced to shield himself from the rubble and giving Lockdown the time to attack the Prime with his Energon Baselard that he held in his left servo. The Bounty Hunter also swapped his Photon Cannon for his hook before grabbing Optimus' left shoulder and throwing him against a nearby structure. The Autobot Leader let out a grunt before bashing his Vector Shield-Cannon against Lockdown's faceplates, knocking him back a bit.

With some free space now, Optimus swung the Sword of Judgement at Lockdown, slashing against his lower chassis and making him bleed a little bit of Energon. The Bounty Hunter, however, struck back by kicking Optimus in the chestplates before stabbing him in the right shoulder. The Prime countered by swinging his Vector Shield-Cannon, but Lockdown dodged it before swapping his hook for his Photon Cannon again. When Optimus tried to strike with the Sword of Judgement, the Bounty Hunter fired his Photon Cannon, knocking the sword out of Optimus' right servo. Fortunately, the Autobot Leader quickly deployed his right wrist-mounted Energon Sword and used it and his Vector Shield-Cannon to continue the fight.

During their duel, Cade was slowly making his way towards them. The human inventor had spotted
Optimus running off to fight Lockdown, and Cade felt he had a commitment to help the Autobot Leader after all he had done for him and his family. Cade watched as Optimus was slowly being overpowered by the Bounty Hunter, who was more refreshed than the Prime. However, before Cade could act, the brick wall he was using for cover was peppered with 9x19mm Parabellum FMJ rounds and caused Cade to lose his grip on his Battle Rifle-Dagger. Then he found himself backed against the wall at gunpoint by Harold Attinger holding Savoy's P30 Pistol at him. The ex-Director of Cemetery Wind and disavowed CIA agent was covered in dirt and dust, clothes slightly torn. But like James, the man had the same burning rage (along with a bit of insanity) in his eyes.

This rage was shown when Harold began to speak: "You see it takes a lot of willpower to make a man do what is necessary for their country, for their fellow humans, without any 25-years worth of recognition whatsoever!"

Optimus, who had kicked Lockdown back, finally took notice of the two humans. "Cade!"

But before he could help, Lockdown knocked the Prime off his pedes before grabbing him with his hook and slamming him against a stone pillar. Knocking away his Vector Shield-Cannon, the Bounty Hunter impaled Optimus through the lower chassis with the Sword of Judgement.

With both his eyes and pistol still on Cade, Attinger continued his ranting: "There are no good or evil Transformers, Yeager! The only sides are us and them! And you and your daughter chose them!"

But before he could continue, a tranq-dart hit Harold in the back of his neck, knocking him out cold and causing his P30 to fall out of his right hand before it was crushed by the pedes of a purple femme. Cade looked at Elita as she continued running towards Lockdown with her Photon Cannon out.

"Anytime," said Cade as he retrieved his Battle Rifle-Dagger.

Elita had reached Lockdown and opened fire, hitting the Bounty Hunter in the back. Lockdown growled as he fired back, but the purple femme was moving too fast for him to get a hit as Elita kept on firing as she was soon joined by Cade. "You will never hurt my sparkmate again, Lockdown!" roared Elita as she fired another shot.

Said mech snarled as he swung his Energon Baselard at the femme, but missed her by a foot. "Blasted femme!"

Suddenly, Bumblebee arrived. He briefly opened his doors to allow Tessa and Shane to get out before transforming and joined Elita and Cade in their fight against Lockdown. The young Scout delivered a kick at the Bounty Hunter's back that sent Lockdown crashing into the ground. Seeing his daughter, Cade could only smile as she and her boyfriend were trying to find a way to free Optimus. Said Prime watched as Lockdown got back up and blocked a punch from 'Bee before tossing the yellow mech aside.

"Get out of here, all of you! This is my fight!" pleaded Optimus.

"Wrong! It's my fight and you're all going to die!" roared Lockdown as he fired at Elita. He missed, but the purple femme lost her footing and crashed into some crates as the Bounty Hunter attacked Cade.

Bumblebee and Elita got back on their pedes and resumed their attack on Lockdown, with Cade having managed to damage the Bounty Hunter's Photon Cannon, forcing Lockdown to rely on both his hook and Energon Baselard.
"I will kill each and everyone of you, painfully and slowly. And I will make sure that both Prime and his sparkmate watch as I do so," growled Lockdown as he grabbed 'Bee and kneed him in the upper chassis, before proceeding to throw the Scout to the ground and kicking him straight towards Elita, causing her to jump out of the way.

This just left Cade as he was pinned down by his larger opponent. The inventor had managed to raise his Battle Rifle-Dagger barely in time to block Lockdown's hook as he tried to impale the human. However, the Bounty Hunter was able to knock Cade's weapon out his hands, leaving him completely exposed.

Raising his Energon Baselard, Lockdown declared: "Now you will die, you annoying insect!"

But before the final blow could be struck, the Bounty Hunter suddenly cried out in pain when his left forearm was sliced off with a single blade swing. Surprised, Lockdown spun around...only to have the very same blade impale him through the chestplates and piercing his spark-chamber. While the Mercenary had been distracted during his fight with Bumblebee, Elita and Cade, Shane and Tessa were able to free Optimus with the use of a nearby tow truck. Quickly, the Autobot Leader picked up the Sword of Judgement and saved Cade.

Coughing up Energon, Lockdown stood in place as he felt his spark dimming. As the light in Lockdown's green optics began to fade, Optimus glared straight at the Bounty Hunter's faceplates.

"That was for Jetfire and all of the other Autobots that you and Cemetery Wind have murdered," said the Prime as he roughly kicked Lockdown's corpse off the blade and causing his offlined frame to hit the ground with a resounding thud. Optimus vented some air; at long last, the nightmare was over. He had finally avenged his fellow Autobots who had been murdered for the past three years.

Sadly, the respite was brief as a plasma bolt sailed overhead. Charging towards the group of three Autobots and three humans were the remaining Vehicons with their weapons out.

Optimus, Elita and Bumblebee prepared themselves for a fight, but it turned out it wouldn't be necessary as Omega Supreme, now in his 105-foot biped form, landed between them and the Autobots.

"Targets confirmed. Firing at will," said Omega as he fired his Mega-Thermo Rocket Launcher at the drones, obliterating them in an instant. "All targets have been terminated."

"Thank you, Omega," said Optimus as he had used his Vector Shield-Cannon to protect the humans from the shockwave caused by Omega's weapons. "Optimus to Prowl, do you read me?" ordered the Prime over the comms.

"Optimus, my man! Good to hear from ya! I'm guessing Lockdown is down then?" asked Jazz.

"Jazz?" asked Optimus. "Yes, Lockdown has been dealt with. Where's Prowl?"

"He's being tended to by Jolt. We managed to regroup outside of the city, but we got ambushed by Starscream and his fellow Seekers. The sluggers took the Seed with them," reported the Saboteur. "We saw them flying off with Astrotrain and Jetstorm, probably taking it and Megatron back to their base."

"What?! The Decepticons have the Seed?!" exclaimed Optimus.

"Pretty much. But the good news is that both Adam and Wheeljack played around with it before the 'Cons grabbed it. According to them, they reduced the Seed's blast radius to the point that they will have only enough Cyber-Matter for one frame. In other words: the Decepticons basically got away
with damaged goods," replied Jazz cheerfully.

The Autobot Leader felt like a weight had been lifted off his shoulders. "That is indeed good news. We'll meet up with you in a bit. Prime out."

Suddenly, a groan got everyone's attention. Looking towards the source, Optimus' optics hardened as they focused in on Harold Attinger, whom the Autobot Leader recognized him instantly from Cade's description of him back in Chicago. Slowly, Harold was still recovering from Elita's tranq-dart. As he got up, though, the disavowed CIA agent noticed a huge shadow looming behind him. Turning around and looking up, Attinger only saw a very angry Optimus Prime reaching out to grab him.

Chapter End Notes

I do hope you all like what I did with Savoy's fate.

The Heavy Ion FlaK Cannon is based off of the German 88mm FlaK 18/36/37/41 Anti-Aircraft/Anti-Tank Cannon used in WW2. The Allies referred this weapon as the dreaded '88'.

A baselard is a type of short sword from the Late Middle Ages.

As for Attinger, you'll find out what becomes of him in the next and final chapter of this story. Now, part three and four of my TBAM Series shows ALL of the alt-modes for the Autobots, Decepticons, Neutrals, and KSI Drones. Part five of my series is gonna show my notes for the TRF in my altered take for TLK, which is part six.

So please be sure to leave a review or comment!
Endings and Beginnings

Chapter Notes

So here's the final chapter for my altered take for AOE. Be sure to leave a review or comment!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

(Three Natural Bridges, Wulong Karst, China)

"To be honest, Hound. If I had to compare between you and Ironhide, I would have to say that you will probably lose more parts than him," complained Ratchet as he continued working on the Commando's wounds.

"Ack, what's a little life without risks. But we still sent those 'Cons packing," huffed Hound before getting a wrench to the helm by the Autobot CMO and chuckles from the others.

Despite no longer being flightworthy, the downed transport ship still served as a temporary retreat for the Autobots and letting them lick their wounds from the battle. It also served as a hideout from unwanted eyes. Due to the actions of Starscream and the Seekers, reinforcements from the Chinese People's Liberation Army's Guangzhou Military Region had to come from farther away. When they did, both the Autobots and the Decepticons were long gone, with Lockdown's ship having finally sunk to the bottom of the South China Sea, making it way too deep for human-made vessels to follow it. Joshua, Su and Darcy opted to remain behind in order to turn themselves in at the U.S Embassy in Beijing. Joyce promised to take half of the blame for what had happened in Hong Kong, and had told Cade that he would help him and Tessa find a new home for them. Apparently, the events in Hong Kong have seemed to change the CEO of KSI and humbling him for the better.

Back aboard the transport ship, a makeshift Medical Bay had been made. Right now, it currently housed Sideswipe, Mirage, Drift, Breakaway, and Hound and Cliffjumper, with Ratchet and Jolt tending to them. The six Autobots had taken the most damage from both the ambush by the Seekers and the battle from before. Especially Drift, who had been attacked by Starscream while trying to protect the Seed, and was now currently in recharge. Several tubes were plugged into his chassis, with Jolt overlooking his condition.

"He'll live, but the damage to his T-cog was too great and any attempt to repair it might be fatal. Basically, he won't be able to transform into his secondary alt-mode," reported the Junior Medical Officer.

"Better than being unable to transform at all," commented Cliffjumper from his berth.

Meanwhile, the other Autobots were doing their own activities. Omega Supreme, Crosshairs, Warpath, Evac, Silverbolt, Air Raid and the Knights were guarding the perimeter. The Wreckers and Wheeljack were working on something next to the transport ship's thrusters. Inside, the Mini-Cons were hanging around, while helping Fixit find a suitable alt-mode. In a larger room, Bumblebee, the Chevy Twins, the femmes and the humans were watching over the Hatchlings. The young Cybertronians were eagerly moving about, with some climbing on 'Bee and the twins who were sitting on the ground or were playing with each other and inspecting the humans.
"I'm very relieved that all of the Hatchlings were okay during this whole fiasco," cooed Arcee as she held one of said young Cybertronians. The pink femme also noticed that this one was beginning to form another armored layer that was colored in cobalt and yellow, along with a hint of white as well. "And their colors are beginning to appear."

"Does that relate to them getting older?" asked Tessa as her fingers were currently being touched by a curious amethyst and red-colored Hatchling.

Beside her were Cade and Shane, with her boyfriend trying to discourage an auburn and carmine-colored Hatchling from biting his left arm while holding an uncomfortable look on his face. Cade only smirked at Shane discomfort while petting the helm of a black and lime-colored Hatchling, earning purrs from the little one.

"In a way, yes," replied Elita as she was currently feeding a beige and silver-colored Hatchling. "As our race lives much longer than your kind, the time it takes for us to grow is also longer too. When a Hatchling begins to develop an armor-colored layer, it means they will soon become Sparklings, the Cybertronian equivalent of a child."

"Fortunately, we already know the gender of each Hatchling. Next comes with giving them their designations. It was decided we would do that once their colors began to show," added Chromia as she stopped two Hatchlings, one colored in yellow-grey and the other in maroon from fighting one another.

Meanwhile, in the front of the transport ship, Prowl and Jazz were discussing about recent events. "Despite the Decepticons having managed to grab the Seed, young Adam's tampering on it has made it basically harmless," said Prowl. "But that doesn't mean we are safe. We still have no idea on the Decepticons' main force, both their size and location. You also did mention that you've received communication from another Autobot, right, Jazz?"

The Saboteur nodded. "Yeah, from another Scout named Camshaft. Turns out he's been leading a group of Autobot refugees in Cuba last year."

"Cuba?" asked Prowl.

"Remember when Flak was murdered there by Cemetery Wind while trying to protect some Cuban civilians? Apparently, that put us in a very good light in the eyes of the Cuban Government. They've declared that they will grant asylum to any Autobot on Earth. Might be a good place for us to go when Optimus comes back," suggested Jazz.

"Indeed, but where did Optimus go?" wondered Prowl.

Jazz just shrugged. "No idea. All he said was that he had a 'loose-end' to tie up or something, and then he drove off with Ironhide in tow."

(Meanwhile...)

Miles away from the transport ship and Hong Kong, Harold Attinger was tossed roughly to the ground. Coughing a bit, the begrudging man slowly got up due to his head was still in a daze as he regained his bearings. Seconds later, Harold turned around to see Optimus Prime towering over him. Behind the Autobot Leader was Ironhide with his arms crossed. The Prime had a neutral look on his faceplates as he stared down at the human who was directly responsible for both his Autobots' suffering during these past three years and Sam and Mikaela's murder.

Instinctively, Harold pulled out his SW1911SC E-Series Pistol from his holster before flicking the
safety off and aiming it at Optimus. Said Prime paid the sidearm with no heed as its small size and caliber not being a threat to him.

"So, we finally met face-to-face, Optimus Prime," said Attinger as he was breathing heavily.

Optimus' optics shuddered as he looked at the disavowed CIA agent who was appearing to be slowly losing his sanity. Although he was still angered by the actions of this human, there was less rage in his spark now, but also mixed with pity too.

"You remind me very much of him, of Megatron," began Optimus while still ignoring the human sidearm aimed at him. "He spoke about everything that he did, the war crimes and atrocities he committed, were all for Cybertron, for my people. But in truth, he was doing all of it for his own greed and lust for power, due to him being corrupted by the Fallen." He then added with a pitiful sigh: "And I see that same desire within you, Harold Attinger."

"Is there a point to all of this?!" demanded the ex-Director of Cemetery Wind with his weapon still raised. "I've hunted you and your kind for three years, killed countless Autobots and Decepticons! You think that I care that Cemetery Wind is no more?! I can just rebuild! And I won't be stopped by the likes of you and your Autobots!"

"No, Attinger, it is over for you," replied Optimus. "The Decepticons aren't the only ones who can hack into your systems. Both Adam and my Saboteur have frozen all of your bank accounts and have destroyed every single asset and source that you possessed. Now you are wanted by your own nation that you claim to serve. The whole world now knows of the war crimes and atrocities that you and your rogue CIA black ops unit have committed against both Cybertronians and humans alike. As of now, you have nothing except for the clothing you're currently wearing and the sidearm you're holding in your hands."

The reaction he got from Harold was exactly what the Prime had expected. The man's face showed a mix of shock, disbelief, rage and a bit of insanity. Although he wasn't a sadist like Megatron, Optimus still took some measure of personal delight at the human's despair.

"Originally, I had planned to kill you," began the Autobot Leader as he turned away. "But I believe this punishment is much more fitting for you, as it brings some measure of justice to both my fallen Autobots and human friends. Farewell."

Attinger didn't even pay any attention to him as Optimus and Ironhide transformed into their respective alt-modes and took off, leaving the man on his own. Slowly, Harold looked at his sidearm and then at the sky. His eyes were wide and his mouth hung open. Then as if reality was finally hitting him, Attinger let out a cry of despair before placing the barrel of his pistol to his chin and then pulled the trigger...

(Back with the Autobots...)

Optimus and Ironhide returned to the others a short time later. There had been much talk between the Autobots, Knights and humans, with new information being shared as well as cheers to their latest victory. Eventually, Optimus approached Grimlock, who was now in his biped form. Behind him were the rest of the Knights while the Autobots stood behind their leader.

"Grimlock, I wish to thank you and your fellow Knights for coming to my Autobots' aid," began Optimus. "Although our first meeting didn't go as well as I hoped, I do wish to make sure that are no hard feelings between us. You and your fellow Knights are free to go where you wish."

Grimlock was silent for a moment, looking at the smaller mech. He then moved his optics to glance
at his team as if he was silently communicating with them. The other Knights nodded their helms in return before Grimlock turn to face Optimus again. "Actually, Prime, me and my team wish to remain with you and the Autobots."

Optimus was surprised by this, but said nothing as Grimlock continued: "You were right, I was consumed by both my pride and anger of what happened to us with Lockdown and that you would use me and my fellow Knights as slaves. I was wrong. You have proven yourself as both an honorable warrior and a true leader. Also, as you said: 'only together can we survive'. So, if you would allow us, me and my team would be honored to join the Autobots," he finished by raising his left servo.

The Autobot Leader looked at the offered servo and then at Grimlock. Then a smile formed on his faceplates as he took the servo with his right one and shook it. "No, Grimlock, the honor is mine. I welcome you and your fellow Knights among us."

There was much cheering of having the seven powerful Knights of Cybertron on their side as the Autobots walked up to greet their new comrades, who equally greeted them back.

"Yeah, now we have the Dinobots on our side!" shouted Adam.

His comment got looks from all the Autobots and humans. "What? They are Autobots that can transform into Cybertronian dinosaurs. Hence the name: Dinobots."

"Dinobots...I like it," said Grimlock with a smile.

However, the celebration came to an end when Optimus got everyone's attention: "My fellow Autobots and human friends, I have thought long on this and have come to the conclusion that Earth will not be safe from Lockdown's benefactors so long as I am here. And thus I have decided to find and confront them myself, alone."

The Prime raised a servo when some tried to speak. "I will hear no objections, this my decision. The rest of you will remain here and protect our human allies. For I believe the fate between our people and the human race runs much deeper than we could ever have possibly imagined. The meeting he had with Alpha Trion came back to mind before looking at his SiC. "Prowl, I'm leaving you in command of the Autobots until my return."

Prowl nodded. "Yes, sir. I won't disappoint you."

Optimus nodded before walking outside the transport ship and activating the thrusters on his Vector Shield-Cannon. The rockets came to life and in seconds, the Autobot Leader was flying into the air and out of Earth's atmosphere.

(The Pentagon, one month later...)

Walking down the hallway towards SecDef's office in his Class "A" Army Service Uniform (ASU) and wearing his tan beret that designated him as a member of the U.S Army's 75th Ranger Regiment was Lieutenant-Colonel William Lennox. Walking beside him was General Morshower in his USMC Service 'A' Uniform. It had been a very long month for the two of them, with Morshower working closely with the FBI and Interpol in apprehending any surviving Cemetery Wind personnel, while Lennox was transporting the remains of Junkheap, Mixmaster, Scrapper, Rampage, two Cyber-Wolves, fifteen Cybertronian Mercenaries, 100 Rally Fighter Drones, twenty Vehicons, sixteen wrecked Orbital Assault Fighters and the remaining Transformium that KSI had left to be all dumped into the Laurentian Abyss off the coast of Eastern Canada, where Submarine Squadron 4 of the U.S Navy's Atlantic Fleet will be heavily-guarding the area. Meanwhile, both the U.S and
Chinese Governments were working closely together in removing the remains of Lockdown, Stinger, twenty wrecked Orbital Assault Fighters and their pilots, along with untold numbers of KSI Drones and Vehicons from Hong Kong to be dumped into the deepest part of China's territorial waters so that Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy's South Sea Fleet will be guarding them. Joshua Joyce was flown back to the U.S to stand trial in front of the U.S Supreme Court for he and his company's involvement with Cemetery Wind. Surprisingly, both the judge and the grand jury went easy on him due to the fact that he too had been manipulated by Attinger. This was followed by trying to find the Autobots and making peaceful contact with them, but with no such luck. Lennox was deeply relieved when he was able to confirm that both Ironhide and Chromia were among the surviving 'Bots. That would make Annabelle happy.

A few minutes later, having walked past Keller's secretary, both Lennox and Morshower entered the man's office. Keller was currently talking to someone on the phone, probably the President by the sound of it. The conversation came to an end one minute as SecDef hang up the phone. The two soldiers saluted him. "At ease, you two. Have a seat," said Keller.

Lennox and Morshower took off their respective headgear before they sat down in front of their superior as he began speaking: "First off, I like to thank both of you for your hard-work on dealing with those drones. I would've thanked you all sooner, but politics were keeping me occupied."

"Understood, sir. We're just glad we were able to stop them before they did any more harm," replied Morshower.

SecDef nodded. "Now, regarding Cemetery Wind, they have been officially shut down and labeled as a rogue extremist organization by Interpol, FBI, NSA and the CIA. Any CW personnel that weren't at their base when it was destroyed are being extradited to The Hague to stand trial in front of the International Criminal Court for both war crimes and crimes against humanity. We've also confirmed that both Harold Attinger and his right-hand man, James Savoy, are dead. We found Attinger's body outside of Hong Kong. Apparently, the man committed suicide, probably seeing it as the better alternative then being sentenced to life imprisonment."

Lennox snorted. He wouldn't weep over that scumbag's death. Not even Galloway would dare do what Attinger had done. "Sir, what about the Autobots? Has there been any attempts made to contact them?" asked Will.

"Unfortunately, the leaders of Earth's governments, minus Cuba, have officially declared that all Cybertronians are illegal. Any Autobot or Decepticon spotted are to be killed or captured on sight, regardless of faction," replied Keller sadly with a sigh.

That snapped a nerve in the Lieutenant-Colonel as he abruptly stood up before slamming his right fist on SecDef's desk. "Are they insane?! Didn't anyone read Joyce's report?! If the Autobots hadn't acted, then the Decepticons would've wiped us out!" shouted Lennox.

Morshower gently put a hand on the Army Ranger's left shoulder, trying to calm him down and guide back into his seat.

"I share your view too, Lennox. Both the President and Director Mearing do as well," said Keller. "However, its out of our hands. The memory of Chicago still hangs onto their minds, and the recent event in Hong Kong last month have just added to their fear. They're afraid of possible future devastations. And fear, anger and paranoia can make people do things that are very unwise. Despite that, there is some good news."

"Good news, sir?" asked Lennox as he finally sat down.
"A new international paramilitary group has been formed. The Transformers Reaction Force, or TRF, which is comprised of former SpecOps soldiers from the U.S, U.K, France, Germany and Italy. This time, their backgrounds will be thoroughly checked to ensure that we don't have another rogue Cemetery Wind on our hands. I also did manage to pull some strings. Chris, I'm appointing you as TRF's commanding officer, with Lennox being assigned to the unit as well. Since the both of you have experience in hunting down Decepticons, Earth's governments have allowed your entry into the TRF," explained Keller.

"I see," said Morshower. "You want us to have the TRF to focus more on the Decepticons, while giving the Autobots more freedom and less notice."

"At best, yes. And if you can't, I want you to capture any Autobots you find rather than having them be terminated. Joyce is also aware of my plan and has agreed to have his company provide us the tech to support the TRF in exchange for a full pardon from the President, no doubt influenced by Optimus," explained John before looking at Morshower. "Chris, if you can, I would like you and Lennox to get Senior Master Sergeant Epps and any other former NEST personnel to join the TRF too. Their presence will greatly increase the chances of much less conflict with the Autobots. But beware, other members in the TRF might oppose you."

Will sighed. It wasn't the best plan, but at least it was something. "Fine, whatever helps us get rid of the 'Cons faster."

General Morshower also nodded in agreement, pleasing Keller. "Thank you, gentlemen. I fear that there will be rough times for all of us. Hopefully, we can endure them to a better outcome."

(Badlands, South Dakota, one week later...)

"The term 'badlands' is really ideal for a place like this," commented Jazz as he looked at the screen. Hovering in South Dakota, surrounded by the wide dry terrain of the Mount Rushmore State were the Autobots. They were currently aboard Omega Supreme, who was in his alt-mode. The giant mech was towing the damaged transport ship from behind, as well as using the thrusters made by Wheeljack and the Wreckers to lessen the strain on Omega.

Thirty-eight days have passed since the Battle of Hong Kong, which had left 2,557 civilians dead and another 4,060 wounded, soon followed by Optimus' departure from Earth to find his 'Creators'. Since then, Prowl had decided that they needed to establish a new FOB (Forward-Operating-Base) for the next few years. The Tactician had the Aerialbots search the globe for an area that was both isolated from the humans, as well as contained a decent size of natural resources that the Autobots could convert into Energon. The result was the Badlands of South Dakota. Unfortunately, the area was part of Siouxland, and thus Cade, Adam and Bumblebee had left them to negotiate with their chief.

Speaking of Cade, it turned out the inventor was now a wanted fugitive. With Cybertronians now declared illegal by Earth's governments, except for Cuba, Cade's willingness to help the Autobots made him a criminal. Fortunately, Tessa and Shane were spared that fate, but only if they weren't with him. And so with a heavy heart, Cade was forced to stay away from his daughter. He also told Shane to take care of Tessa or he would throttle him, something that the Irish-American driver took very seriously. The couple were currently living in New York City, and thanks to Joshua, were able to purchase a decent apartment. While Tessa continued her high-school life, eventually going to college, Shane got a job as a truck driver at KSI's facility at Manhattan.

With Adam, the young teen had decided to stay with Cade and the Autobots. Despite not being wanted, he didn't think it was right to separate from his dear friends, Evac and Rewind, and wanted
to stay with them. Plus, he also wanted to learn more about his Cybertronian heritage and perhaps discover other secrets of his unique powers. The twelve-year-old also got along well with Ratchet, who would teach Adam about their biology.

Back to the present, Prowl walked up towards Jazz. "In this case, though, the term 'bad' is actually good for us. If Cade and Adam can reach an agreement with the Sioux Chief, this place would be perfect for us to setup a FOB," said the former Iacon Enforcer as the two stood in the Ark's Operations Room, along with Ironhide, Ratchet, Silverbolt and Elita.

Omega's baritone voice then covered the room: "Incoming transmission. Origin: Autobot."

"It's probably Camshaft," noted Jazz. "Put him on the screen, Omega."

A few seconds later, the screen's image changed to show a silver mech with maroon-colored limbs and a single optic. "This is Camshaft. Do you read me, Autobots?" asked the mech.

"We hear you loud and clear, Camshaft. What's your status in Cuba?" asked Prowl.

"Good so far. The humans, Simmons and Dutch, have just returned after negotiating with the Cuban Government. Any Autobot refugees that arrive are allowed freedom in Cuba, so long as it doesn't interfere with their military exercises or civilians. In return, they can't make us join their armed forces or give them any of our tech," explained Camshaft. "Leo and I are currently helping refugees settle in an abandoned military base near the Escambray Mountains. You sure you guys don't want to come?"

"Thank you, Camshaft. But I believe me and my team's presence would be more useful here in the U.S.," replied Prowl. "From here, we can help newly-arrived Autobots reach Cuba safely, as well as deal with any Decepticons should they attack you and the refugees. Please inform us if anything new develops."

"Will do. Camshaft out," said the one-optic mech before ending the transmission.

Prowl then looked at his leader's sparkmate. "I know you've already made your decision, but are you really sure that you and your sisters wouldn't be more comfortable with taking the Hatchlings to Cuba? They would be much more safer there than with us. I don't mean to sound 'sexist', but you three are the only ones who can properly take care of the little ones because of your caretaking programming," said the Autobot SiC, recalling that Elita used to be an educator back on Cybertron before the war began.

The purple femme shook her helm. "No offense taken, Prowl. And yes, me and my sisters have discussed it, and we would feel better here. I know that we are risking the Hatchlings' wellbeing by doing this, but none of the refugees in Cuba have the proper teaching of raising young Cybertronians. Plus, Chromia won't allow herself to be separated from her sparkmate," replied Elita as she motioned at Ironhide. "And I personally believe the Hatchlings will be better protected here than in Cuba."

Prowl sighed, knowing there was no point in arguing anymore, and that's when his personal comms began to beep, alerting him to an incoming message. "Prowl here."

"This is Bumblebee. Me, Cade and Adam have just finished speaking with the Chief," reported the young Scout.

"And?" asked Prowl.

"The Chief has agreed to let us stay at an old junkyard that they're not using anymore. I've
personally checked its location and it's near where the strongest source of energy is coming from. Plus, the wrecked vehicles can be used as cover for us too, although we have to work something out with the transport ship and the Dinobots," said 'Bee as he sent the data to the others.

After looking at it, Prowl agreed that it will work for a FOB, once they added their own modifications to it that is. And with that, Omega carefully lowered the transport ship at the back of the junkyard, while Cade, Adam and Bumblebee watched from a safe distance. The Autobots watched from the Ark's windows as the looked at what would be their new home for the foreseeable future.

(Decepticon Base)

"Audio receptors online."

"All systems, including his weapons, are operational."

"Energon flow is normal, no signs of disruption."

"His T-cog is working perfectly."

"Activating his optics."

Megatron's vision began to come online. What greeted him was a single light and a ceiling made of stone, along with multiple cables.

Then Shockwave's helm came into view. "How are you feeling, my Lord?"

As raised his left arm and flexed his clawed digits, Megatron commented: "Like I've truly been reborn."

Currently in Flatline's Medical Bay, Megatron got up from the operating table. Inside the room with him, besides Shockwave, were Soundwave and Flatline. Laserbeak had perched himself ontop of a nearby machine as he watched the whole thing from above.

The Decepticon Leader took a moment to take in his new form. It possessed the same grey-colored format as his original frame had. One could best describe his new frame as that of a barbaric gladiator, equipped with a retractable battlemask too.

"Although the Seed's tampering was unexpected, the Cyber-Matter that I was able to harvest from it proved very useful in creating your new frame. I've managed to recreate your Fusion Cannon and attached it to your right forearm. And I was also able to create a close-combat weapon with the remaining Cyber-Matter as well," explained Shockwave.

Leaning to the side of the nearby wall was a black-colored sword-axe with serrated edges on it and at the top was a crescent-shaped tip. Megatron grabbed it with one servo, noticing how the handle could be wielded with two servos. He swung it a few times to get a feel of the Cyber-Matter Sword-Axe before attaching it to his back.

"Well done, my old friend," said Megatron as he looked at the one-optic mech. "My trust in you has not wasted."

"You honor me, Lord Megatron," replied Shockwave with a bow. "Do you wish to meet the troops and let them know of your status?"

"In due time. However, we must focus on the current structure of our army on Earth. What is the
"Unfortunately, we lost a good portion of our Vehicons during the recent battle at Hong Kong. Furthermore, Mixmaster, Scrapper and Rampage have been KIA, leaving only Long Haul as the soul surviving Constructicon," began Shockwave. "Barricade has recently came out of surgery himself. The damage done to him by Prime's SiC had forced Flatline to give him an entirely new frame. We are currently producing more Vehicons, but it will take a while. In terms of actual Decepticons, we still outnumber the Autobots. Our Energon supplies, while not dangerously low, are at a state where we cannot grow any new Protoforms and thus must rely on the Vehicons to makeup for the bulk of our forces on Earth."

"I see," hummed the Decepticon Leader as he took all of this in. "In that case, here is the new command structure: Shockwave, you will be my new SiC as well as being in charge of all scientific endeavors while working alongside Flatline. I shall also be assigning Fracture, Wreckage and Stockade to you as Field Officers under your command. They are some of the warriors that I can trust."

"Understood, Lord Megatron," replied Shockwave as he saw the logic in that. Flatline was also in agreement.

"Blackout and Brawl will command the aerial and ground Vehicons respectively. Their authority over them shall be second only to yours and of course, mine. Soundwave, you shall keep your old post as usual, while Starscream will keep his position as Air Commander," said Megatron to his trusted TiC.

Soundwave nodded. "As you command, Lord Megatron. But is it wise to allow Starscream to keep his old post? While the others won't betray you, he might try to double-cross you again."

"Which is why I want Thundercracker to keep a close-optic on him. If Starscream does try to do anything, I want him terminated immediately," ordered Megatron. Current events would now allow the tyrant the luxury of punishing traitors as he originally could. "Also, have Barricade meet up with me. I intend to head out soon and I want him to serve as my personal Field Officer for the time being."

"'Head out'?" repeated Shockwave. "Do you have a destination in mind, my Lord?"

"Before his death in the Battle of Giza, my master, the Fallen, told me many secrets," said Megatron. "Things about Earth that we have never known about before. As I watched recent events unfold the way they did, it was then did I realized that something is coming and that another opportunity to restore Cybertron is approaching. We must be prepared to play our parts before that times comes," finished the Decepticon Leader as he walked out with Soundwave and Shockwave in tow.

All the while, Megatron had a new plan forming in his processor, a plan to ensure that he and his fellow Decepticons will come out victorious and that the Autobots and humans will perish!

Chapter End Notes

Bet you didn't see that coming, Attinger committing suicide. Despite me hating that scumbag, I think it was better for him to kill himself rather than spending the rest of his miserable life in prison. Wow, that is the LONGEST story I've ever written so far. Everyone get ready for AU take on TLK soon. Be sure to leave a review or comment!
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!