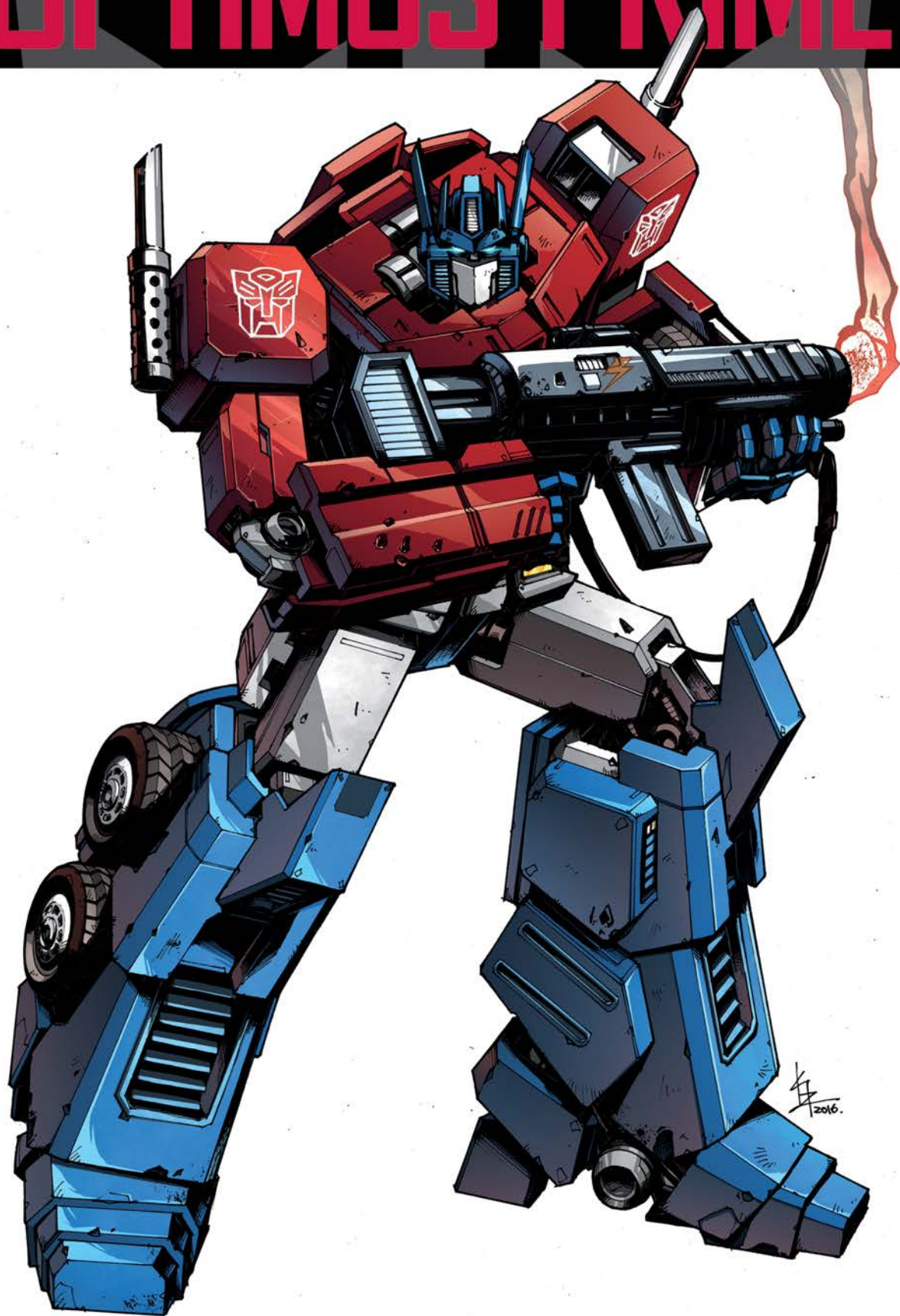


BARBER • ZAMA • MILNE

OPTIMUS PRIME





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THAT'S HIM.

HEFTER.

HE LOVED THE STARS—WANTED TO BE AN ASTRO-PHYSICIST.

BUT THAT WASN'T CONDUCTIVE TO HIS ALT-MODE.



CLOSEST HE GOT TO SPACE WAS UNLOADING SHIPS FROM THE OUTER RIM.

THEY SAID THAT'S ALL HE WAS GOOD FOR.



I DON'T HAVE TO SPELL OUT WHY THE DECEPTICON MESSAGE WAS APPEALING.

AND YOU CAN'T BLAME HIM FOR WANTING TO SPREAD IT.



WELL, I GUESS YOU CAN. YOU DID.

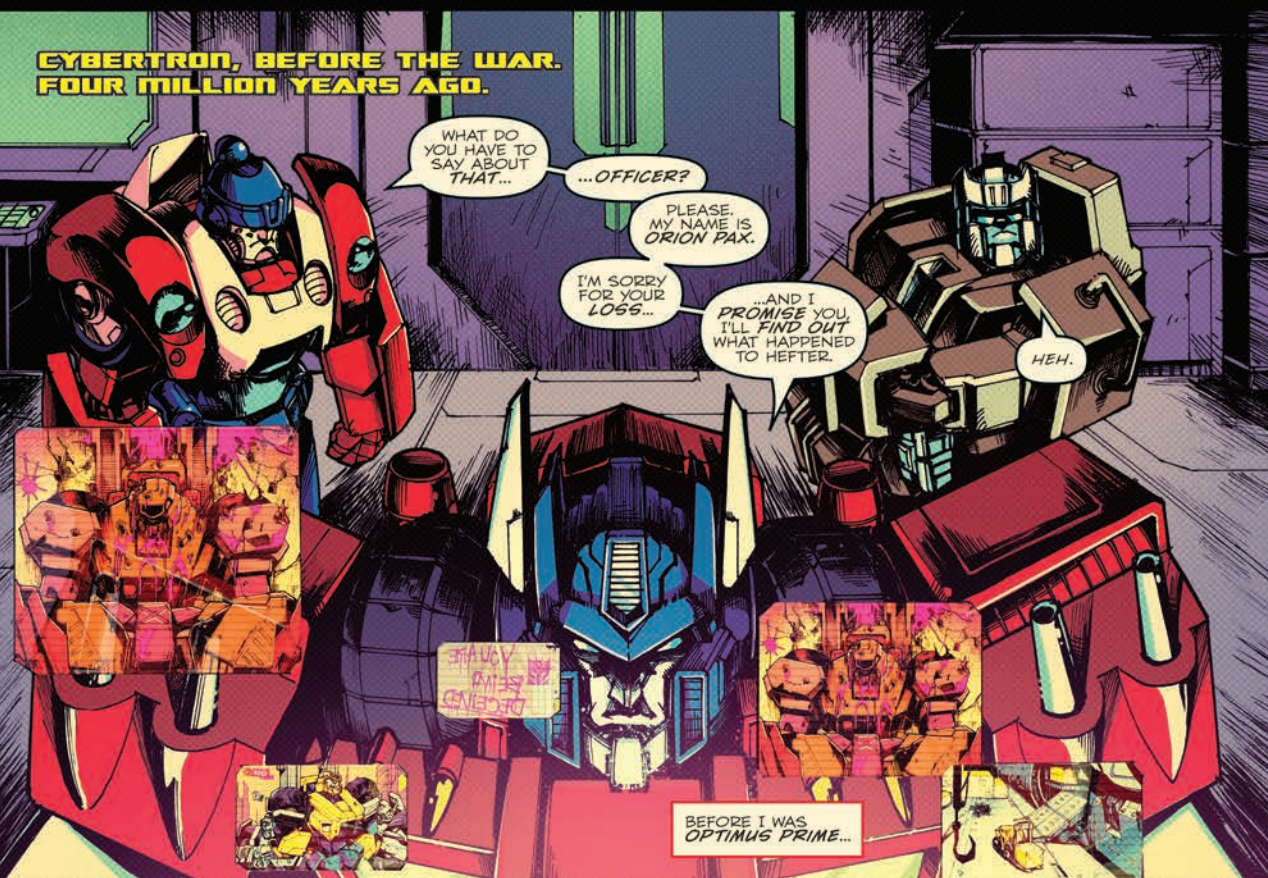
THEY SAY HEFTER WENT AFTER A COP. THEY SAY HE WAS ARMED.

AND NOW THEY SAY HE WAS RUNNING GUNS INTO THE CITY?



ALL I KNOW IS HE NEVER LEFT POLICE CUSTODY.

**CYBERTRON, BEFORE THE WAR.
FOUR MILLION YEARS AGO.**



OUR PLANET HAD BEEN UNITED, AGES AGO, BY THE **THIRTEEN PRIMES**.

OVER THE MILLENNIA, THE **PRIMES** HAD LEFT US; HAD BECOME **LEGEND**.

IN THEIR PLACE, A **NEW SYSTEM** TOOK OVER.

ORION,
MY LAD.

ZETA!

PLEASE. THE WALLS HAVE **EARS**, AND **APPEARANCES** MUST BE KEPT.

THE NAME IS **ZETA PRIME**, OLD FRIEND.

WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THIS CASE? **DREADFUL** BUSINESS, I'M AFRAID.

THEY CALLED THEMSELVES **PRIMES**, THESE NEW LEADERS OF CYBERTRON.

I'M... **SURE** THE OFFICERS HAD JUSTIFICATION.

GOOD, GOOD. THAT'S WHAT WE WANT FROM ORION PAX—SAVOR OF THE **PRIMAL BASILICA!**

DON'T FORGET I SAVED **YOUR** LIFE, AS WELL.

I THANK **PRIMUS** EVERY MORNING.

BUT THEY **WEREN'T** LEGENDS. THEY WERE **DESPOTS**.

I THOUGHT **ZETA** WAS DIFFERENT.

MAY I ASK YOU A QUESTION, ORION?

IF IT'S ABOUT THE **MATRIX**, WE BOTH KNOW IT'S A **FORGERY**.

THE WALLS, ORION.

ANYWAY... REAL OR NOT, PERHAPS SOMEDAY THE **MATRIX OF LEADERSHIP** SHALL BE YOURS...



