

Michael McConnohie Audio Interview

Contributed by Kalidor
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What's old is new here at The Allspark. In our first of many repostings of past content, we are happy to bring you our very first audio interview, originally posted all the way back in Feb 2005! In this original episode of Allspark radio, Rook sits down with Michael, as well as Tracks and Cosmos in this very informative and entertaining segment of what was first of many great interviews on our pages.

Allspark audio interviews are a lighthearted production hosted by Daniel Ross as the character Rook from Mouth Zero Four Studios here at The Allspark. With the gracious time given to us by professionals such as Mr. McConnohie, we are able to provide an alternative to simple text interviews you find on many websites. We thank you Michael, and everyone else, who has given back to the fans in this way. Now, on with the show!

Allspark Radio Presents...

Michael McConnohie with Daniel Ross as Rook ROOK: Greetings Neuroloaders, my name is Rook, reporting to you live via Allspark radio transmission, from Mouth Zero 4 studios in Cybertron City. I have here 5 of Cybertron's greatest heroes, some plucked from distant planets, and others from dimensions yet to be fully explored. Speaking with me today are Autobots Tracks and Cosmos, as well as Autobot Spychangers Ironhide, and Hot Shot.

Lastly, I have with me a human from the planet Earth named Michael McConnohie, who has astonishingly enough been able to download each of these Autobot heroes' voice tracks for uses of commercial enterprise and mimicry. Gentlemen welcome to the program!

Rook: This first set of questions is for Tracks.

Tell us how you would deal with the following scenario. You're in a high-speed chase with a rogue Decepticon. During the chase, a canister of acid is tipped over, splashing on your finish. You know that if you continue the chase, your finish will be ruined, but there is a drive through car wash only seconds away, which could save you considerable damage, but cause you to lose your pursuit. What do you do? Continue the hunt, and let your paint job be destroyed, or save your paint job and let the 'Con go? Tracks: Well it's about time, my dear fellow. But I see you want to play "gotcha". All right, with your little scenario, we'll play. But first, let's dispel one misconception. I am not, I repeat, NOT vain. I have often said, "I have a highly-developed sense of self-appreciation", but I am not without some objectivity. And understand, I did take an oath. In this case, achieve the objective, and then RUN for the paint chamber! Good grief, man! Rook: In your popular new Alternator form, you are armed to the teeth but you don't have your gorgeous trademark flames. They even wanted to make you yellow! Do you consider the extra weapons a suitable upgrade, or are you still fuming over the change to your paint job?

Tracks: Well as far as that coloration is concerned: you can paint me blue, you can paint me yellow, I'm still going to be that excellent fellow. But let's face it; I make any color look good. It has been said that clothes make the man, but weaponry makes the bot. That may be true as far as it goes, but I dare say I could be just about as effective if I didn't have the extra arms. You see, the use of intelligence is plus the Decepticons have never had.

Rook: Your G1 toy was recently reissued. Unlike many of your comrades who were reissued, your missiles did not have to be made longer. How do you feel about that? Do you like them long, or short?

Tracks: Well it's about time the classics were appreciated for what they are. But oh good heavens, this whole thing with the missiles! What's next, cannon implants?! Really. No, I don't care whether they're long or they're short because they're exactly the right size. I'm sure you've already heard this from that Wankus fellow, it's not how big they are, it's what you *do* with them. Wait-- can I say that on the Internet?

Rook: Both you and Sunstreaker talk yourselves up to be the best-looking Bots around. The difference is you don't point out everyone else's flaws the way Sunstreaker does. If you were to point out his worst flaws, what would they be?

Tracks: In Transformer terms, he is very young. And the thing about youth is, you will grow out of it. In this cult of personality, someone is always trying to manufacture some sort of conflict between individuals. I mean, if you read it in "The Transformer Tattler", it must be true. . . Sunstreaker is on the right side of things. He's a very fine bot. If you can't find anything nice to say about someone, you're not trying. For heaven's sake, find a friend who has something good to say! There's something good about everyone! Except for the Decepticons, of course. It goes without saying. . . Oh, I did say it.

Rook: Yes Tracks, you did say that, and that's history in the making. Thanks Tracks for those insightful and colorful remarks. Let's turn our attention now to Cosmos. Rook: In Megatron's Master Plan, you helped save the entire Autobot cast. As thanks, you were subsequently ignored for a very long time... how did this make you feel? Cosmos: You know, spending the times I have out in the outer reaches of space, I have a lot of time to think. And among the things I've thought is, life really isn't very fair. And sometimes, no good deed goes unpunished. It's all right. I understand. It didn't make me feel very good, but you know, you learn to cope, you learn to see what's important, and taking care of our responsibilities is what was important to me. Rook: Do you think the Autobots overlooked your potential, as one of the few among their ranks who could actually fly?

Cosmos: Well, you've got to remember, Tracks too could also fly. Of course, he wasn't very good at the landing part. I don't think they were very jealous of me, but if they were, I'd kinda take it as a compliment.

Rook: When you would hear your Autobot comrades complain about not being able to fly, did you ever ask them why they didn't just scan alt modes, which could fly? ?

Cosmos: Well, at the time, we weren't in to all that scanning stuff. Pretty much, after we arrived, we sorta took our forms and that's what it was. And we were pretty happy with it. I don't think it pays to be nasty.

Rook: If you were to be the next one up for an Alternator upgrade, what would you be?

Cosmos: You know, the human beings have a saying of "being comfortable in your own skin". I've been sort of green and round and just the way I am for so long, I don't think I'd want to change at all. Call me an old-fashioned bot, that's just the way I am.

Rook: Very interesting. Now these next few questions are for the Autobot Spychangers. These gentlemen will have to be off in a hurry since apparently there is some trouble with Mirage. So I'll only keep it to one question. Rook: So... does it ever bother you that they took your name, gave it to another robot, and made him a focal point of the next two Transformers cartoons, while totally forgetting you?

Hotshot: Well let's face it; it really is a hot name. I mean, who wouldn't want to be called Hot Shot? But I gotta admit, it does kinda gravel me. I mean, I had a good thing going. Had a proven, if somewhat short, track-record. But hey, what are you gonna do? That's the bot biz! Rook: Now, this next question is for Ironhide.

Do you ever get any flak for ripping off... err, I mean, borrowing, your name from such an iconic Generation 1 Transformer?

Ironhide: Hey, you know we got our traditions! And there's all kinds of things you could do! Now Ironhide, the first, I gotta tell ya, if I were gonna take after somebody, heh, I could've made a much worse choice! And I mean, let's face it, it's not like we pick our own names! If I did, heh, y'know I'd be like "Bull Boy" or "Horn Dog" or something like that. Something a little more, uh, evocative, if you know what I mean. Rook: Of course. And I apologize for the horrible impression of the original Ironhide, Hornboy. Now we move on to our special friend from the planet Earth, Michael McConnohie.

Rook: Being the lone link between the Generation 1 cartoon and Robots In Disguise, tell us a little about how the two experiences were alike, and how they were different.

Michael: Well it's really interesting; it's such a bizarre position to be in. As the... 'not so missing link'. Now in Transformers, we had a bunch of guys, a bunch of damned good actors, in the same room. We got to work off each-other, pick up each-other's timing. . . if there were an idea for a flow to go all one way, we could all kind of follow and adjust. When we're doing the dubbed versions, there's only one actor in a booth at a time. The constraints are severe. The animation is what it is. The script is what it is. And there's very, very little room for any kind of flex. You're locked in to the picture; you're locked in to what the words are, because that's what has to fit the mouths. At least. . . for the bots that *have* mouths. Rook: Many people speculate your voice for Cosmos was based off radio legend Peter Lorre. Is this true? And if so, why did you pick that voice?

Michael: Cosmos, my poor problem child, never gets any respect. The 'Rodney Dangerfield' of Autobots. Yes, he is based on Peter Lorre. Wally Burr had an idea for the voice and said, y'know, "try this" when I came in for the auditions, and we noodled around a little bit and decided 'yeah, that's work. Because nobody else is doing that.' And that's sort of how we arrived at the persona for Cosmos. This large, ungainly, lumbering fellow who is not without sensitivity, mind you, but never seems to be really taken in to the arms of his comrades-- which is REALLY not fair. No wonder he enjoyed being worshipped in "The God Gambit"! Okay, he was a little uncomfortable at first, but y'know, as Gods go, he was pretty good.

Rook: We've all heard the cliché "...but what I really want to do is direct." After co-directing RID, do you still really want to direct? And what new insights did your directing experience give you into voice acting?

Michael: I've actually got a T-shirt at home that says, "What I really don't want to do is direct". That really was never my intention. Way back in the late-80s when I started working and I would be on a script in some acquired animation and I would say, "I could do a better script than this", and they said "okay, do it". So then I found myself being an ADR adapter. Okay, fine, good enough. And then I'd be in a studio working on a script I had written, and the director wasn't quite grokking what was going on. And I said, "you know, I could direct better than that", and they said, "Okay, do it!" So basically, I opened my mouth and stuck own my foot in it and. . . pulled out a directing career. I have done a lot of other things as well, a lot of games and so forth. Including a couple of CD-ROMs where I was directing the original cast of 'Star Trek'. And if you don't think it's a daunting thing-- Bill Shatner to Leonard Nimoy and back again. . . You don't have a pulse. And the one thing I have learned from the directing, which directly impacts the voice acting. . . Communication. I now have a much better facility with being able to communicate what something is and how it can be changed without actually giving a line reading. (Actors hate that.)

Rook: Were you surprised by the fandom, which has formed around Transformers when you came to the 2002 Botcon convention?

Michael: Surprised? Floored, flabbergasted is more like it! I have met new friends at these conventions that I never knew I had. Grown up human beings, with babies, people who brought their kids to meet us because we were such a special part of their lives. I mean, no pressure there.

Rook: How much time did you get to spend working with Wankus on Robots In Disguise, are there any fun stories to tell about such a, ahem, "unique" person?

Michael: Wankus. Wankus, Wankus, Wankus. Mhm. He's actually a very nice guy. And rather quiet and unassuming. And there are plenty of stories. None of which I will go in to here. ROOK: Well, that's all the time we have for today. I'd like to thank my guests for taking the time to speak with us here on the Allspark Radio frequency. And we would like to thank or technical staff: Human Daniel Ross for hair, 1DB for makeup, Wheelimus for props, Kalidor for lights... sorry to our guests for the darkness. Newsy891 and Quantumhawk for editing, Prowl for catering... the Energon-laced muffins were spectacular! And finally, we have to thank Defunct for keeping the latrine so sparkling. We couldn't do it without you!
History DOES always favor the victor at the expense of truth, but we here at this program are trying to change all that. For everyone here at the Allspark Radio Frequency, this is Rook, signing off.