

Allspark.com Interview with Simon Furman - Part 2

Contributed by Meister79
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The Allspark is proud to present the second part of our interview with Transformers writer extraordinaire, Simon Furman. In this interview, Simon tells us about the plans percolating in his mind on how he would go about writing Transformers issue #81. Read the full interview [here](#).

For those who missed the first part of the interview, you can read it [here](#).

If you did not already know, Simon is interested in writing Transformers #81, a continuation of the original Transformers comics series. Many Transformers fans who grew up with this 80-issue limited series would love to see Simon craft the next part of that saga, but we need to turn desire into action (or rather, signatures), and let IDW know! If you haven't signed the petition yet, please do so [here](#).

Let's make Transformers #81 happen!

Allspark: With over 2000 signatures on the issue #81 petition, Transformers fans are clearly excited about a continuation of the original series. Did you know there was so much interest out there, or was all the support surprising to you?

Simon Furman: It certainly wasn't lost on me that there were fans out there who'd love this happen, but I certainly had no idea the response would be quite so positive and so overwhelming, numbers-wise. The comments that have gone hand-in-hand with signatures on the petition have also been inspiring. Very quickly, I went from a point (having tried and seemingly failed to get IDW behind this idea already) of reluctant resignation to optimism when the signatures started piling up. And I know the same is true of Andrew (Wildman).

Allspark: In Part 1 of our interview, you mentioned the 'Core Cast' of Transformers being a focal point. Who were you referring to? The core cast as it has evolved over the past 20 years? Or those of importance during the original 80-issue run?

Simon Furman: Of course, Optimus Prime would have spearheaded the continuation. His return in #80 was a rushed affair, and I never really got a chance to explore his reaction to, effectively, being dead. It's got to have had an affect, even to a heroic/stoic type like Prime. I wanted to show in War to End All Wars that the experience has profoundly shaken him, and how he deals with that is by clinging doggedly to the newfound peace, even to the point he ignores stuff unfolding in front of his very eyes, and not really being as alert and aware of the 'loose ends' he left behind, like Bludgeon (did he really buy that 'we'll go away and never bother you again' speech?), Galvatron (how long till he resurfaces?) and, of course, Megatron (what, someone's not going to explore that wrecked giant spacecraft in Canada?). And the other way Prime deals (or not deals) with things is by investing his time in 'mentoring' Hot Rod as his potential successor. There's a noble way to read that or a ducking responsibility way.

Allspark: Following up on that, words and terms like 'continuation' and '#81' suggest a comic heavily influenced by the events and characters in the original comics. However, the 20-year leap and other ideas brought to the table so far have fans concerned that this is more of a soft reboot than a true continuation. Can you talk a little bout that? Can fans of the original comic characters rest assured that their favorite robots will still talk and act the same way as they did twenty years ago?

Simon Furman: When you're supposedly dealing with time-jumps of 4 million years in the original series, surely twenty years is a drop in the ocean for giant, space-faring robots. But rest assured, this is a direct continuation. On Cybertron, not much has happened, except the Autobots (and some Decepticons) have had to get used to peace and cohabiting again. There's bound to have been incidents, friction and flare ups, and we'll certainly refer to some (maybe even flash back to them) but nothing that impacts on the story we're set to tell in WTEAW. And we're not just going to miraculously 'cure' Grimlock. He's still living with the consequences of his exposure to Nucleon, but by this point he's going to increasingly reckless lengths to restore his former transformation abilities. As for the Decepticons, there's a lot of patience as they bide their time, await their opportunity. On Cybertron, that's epitomised by Soundwave. Elsewhere, by Bludgeon (after all, you don't come back from a trouncing with just a skeleton crew and get trounced all over again, do you?). But, on Earth, 20 years is practically an eternity for its inhabitants. You'll have to wait to see why, but it makes All Hail Megatron look like

the teddy bears' picnic. A bit of paint and some Polyfilla just ain't gonna cut it.

Allspark: In your Dreamwave and IDW comics, you've had the opportunity to write a lot of your old favorite characters from the Marvel years, but are there any characters (or Marvel universe versions of characters) you're looking forward to returning to?

Simon Furman: I'd be a liar if I said I didn't want to tackle G1 Grimlock again. His story arc, particularly, I only just got started on. But really it's just great to be back in the hearts and minds of the likes of Prime, Megatron, Bludgeon, Prowl, Soundwave and any others I didn't kill off in #75. Some of those characters that bit the bullet in that issue I'm quite sad I won't get to play with again. But this is no reboot. Gone is gone. Though I do wonder what became of Scorponok's original head?? We'll also learn the fate of Spike/Fort Max. Trust me, I aim to dot as many I's and cross as many T's as humanly possible.

Allspark: Speaking of the characters, as you conceptualize the story in your head, what do they look like? Do they look like they did in comic pages 20 years ago? Or do they resemble the recent redesigns in toy lines like Classics, Universe, Generations, et al?

Simon Furman: I'd like to see those who have returned to Cybertron largely return to Cybertronian forms. Or at least modify their Earth modes. Effectively, after #80, they're redundant. But neither do I want to stray from recognisable visual character archetypes — that belong to the original series (and not Classics or Generations or some other incarnation). We're not tied in WTEAW with any particular toy line, so why impose one? Better to just follow the logical course for the particular characters: no change, some change, or big changes — depending on the character and their circumstances.

Allspark: In the past few years, a lot of fans in the US and other areas outside the UK have finally gotten access to your excellent Marvel UK exclusive material via trade paperbacks and reprints. Are the story lines and characters in the UK comics fair game, or would this only be a continuation of the US material?

Simon Furman: Though in the past I flirted with 'crossovers,' such as the Deathbringer character and the origin/Primus thing, I would probably focus exclusively on the US comic (which had already appropriated characters like Xaaron from the UK). But I would want to bring Ultra Magnus into the US mix, something I never got to do, and maybe the Wreckers.

Allspark: Humans and species alien to the Transformers played a significant role in the original title. But they also pose a problem when it comes to an issue #81. Characters like the Neo-Knights and Death's Head have ownership issues, and of course, the human characters may not have aged as well as the Transformers characters if the story takes place 20 years later (would a middle-aged Donny Finkleberg still be able to fit into his Robotmaster costume?). What kind of assumptions should fans be making in regards to these types of characters? Would they still make an appearance in some form? Or will the continuation focus more on the Cybertronians and less on their supporting non-Transformers?

Simon Furman: I don't think 20 years is an insurmountable obstacle for human cast members. Spike was only a young man, and he was augmented by Nebulan science. So chances are he's still around. Maybe he hasn't even aged that much, a by-product of the Headmaster process. And while I have no plans to feature the Neo Knights, I do want to find out what happened to the likes of Circuit Breaker and GB Blackrock. Even it's just to visit their graves. Eek! Donny Finkleberg won't be making a comeback. Sorry 'bout that.

Allspark: Going back to the 20-year jump for a moment, how does this affect the G2 comic book released by Marvel in the 90's? You have mentioned that some of the G2 concepts will be present in #81, but will it take place after G2? Before? Or will they essentially be writing over them?

Simon Furman: Writing over them most likely. If we get more than one series, G2 concepts and maybe characters (Straxus for sure) would start to crop up. But I'd want to do something different. Not just tell G2 over again. Maybe skip the Swarm and use the idea of The Thirteen instead. But these are just musings. Right now, the only arc I've plotted is the initial one, WTEAW.

Allspark: The Transformers Collectors' Club and Botcon had their own continuation of the original Marvel comics. How would your continuation relate to those comics if at all?

Simon Furman: It probably wouldn't, and that's meaning no disrespect at all to what the TCC have done in their continuation. But to try and amalgamate would be a disaster, and possibly not even allowable. Much as I like to think of the continuation as #81, it's also got to be someone's issue #1, and not just cater solely for those in the know. Part of the reason for the 20 year skip is to, somewhat, reset (not reboot!) the status quo. So you come into

it thinking, hey — I get what’s going on here, there’s this race of robots and they used to fight each other but now they’re this one big happy family. Oh, what’s that, not everyone’s happy with this arrangement? There’s a big army of pissed off Decepticons massing out there? This Grimlock guy is off-the-rails and threatening everything? Oh, and there’s this Megatron guy — the big bad — who people just thought was dead? You get what I mean...

Allspark: While this is an interview about #81, we'd be remiss if we didn't ask about other projects you're working on? Anything else exciting on its way from your inkwell?

Simon Furman: Doing some more Transformers for Million Publishing in Japan. More about that soon! Still double-timing it on the Matt Hatter Chronicles as lead writer and script supervisor. I’m seven scripts in, and about to start on an eighth. Should hit screens end of this year or early next. And there’s actual paying movie work on the horizon. Of which I can say no more. In short, really, really busy. Oh, and there’s a Wildfur project or two Andrew and I are trying to launch (or in one case, re-launch) and a spec pitch for Marvel that’s taking shape.

Thank you for your time, and best of luck with your endeavors! We hope that we will all be reading #81 sometime soon!

Cheers--

--Simon