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WHEN CONTINENTS COLLIDE



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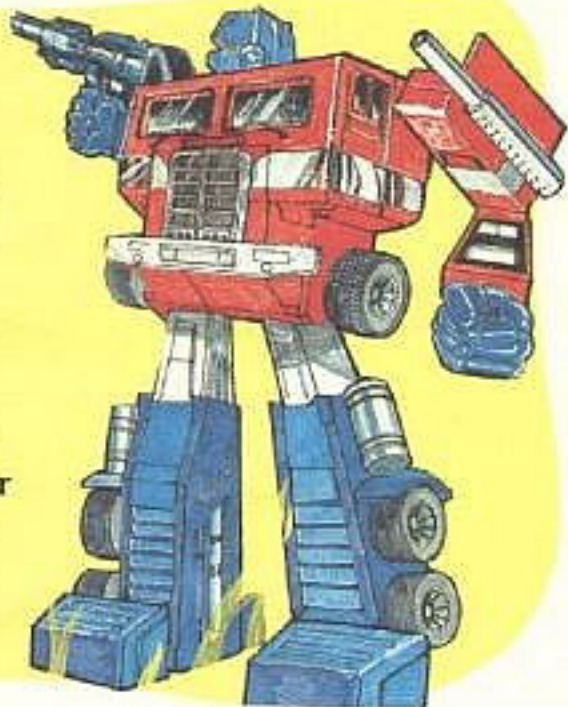


THE **TRANS** 

MORE THAN
MEETS
THE EYE! **FORMERS**[®]

When Continents Collide

Hi, everybody. This is your Transformers Read-Along Book. Every time you hear this sound ... it means it's time to turn the page in your storybook. Now, if you are ready, we will start the story, "When Continents Collide." Don't forget to turn the page every time you hear the sound.



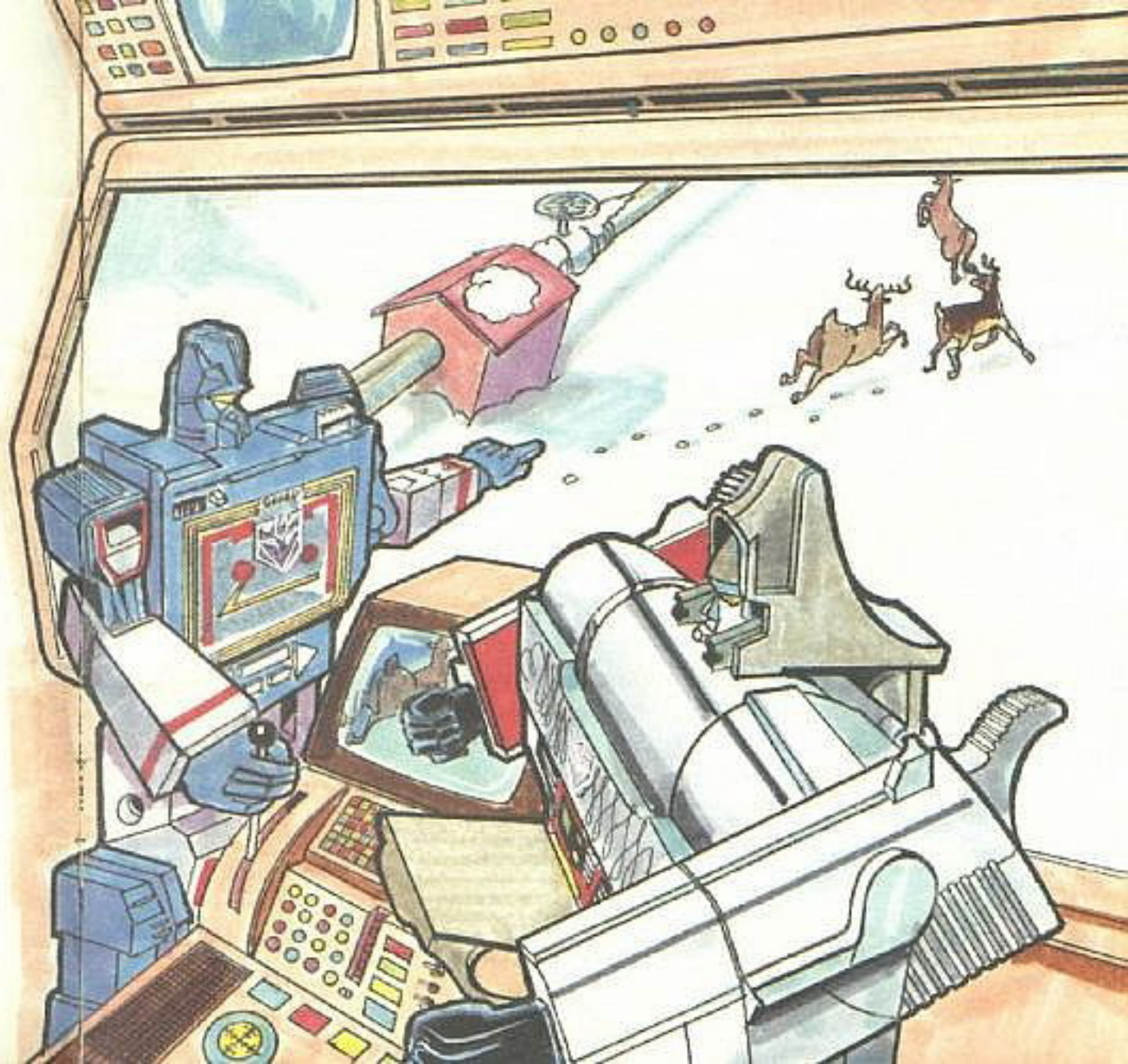
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At first, the sound was barely perceptible and the herd of caribou paid no attention. They were grazing on the small plants growing near the isolated pump-relay station on the Alaska Pipeline.

But the sound grew, and with it, what was only a speck on the horizon became a colossus that dominated the vast northern sky. It was a hovercraft oil transporter that was bigger than two hundred supertankers put together.

High on the command bridge of the transporter stood Megatron, the evil Decepticon leader, observing the docking with his cold, stony stare and realizing full well how valuable this oil transporter, stolen from the Earthlings, would be to him. "Stabilize the ship, then shut down power," Megatron growled to Soundwave, his communications aide.



Huge pilings emerged from the belly of the hovercraft and drove their metal foot pads through the surface ooze, down to the frozen soil below.

"Stabilized now and shutting down power," Soundwave said.

"Can the idle chatter," Megatron snarled. "I've got the attitude sensors"

The big fans revolved to a stop.

"Well, where's the contact? Where's that pathetic, carbon-based slime who helped us steal the transporter and who has now agreed to aid us in siphoning off tons of this Prudhoe Bay crude? ...I don't know why I'm bothering. I can't wait! Soundwave, activate the laser auger for a direct tap into the line itself!"

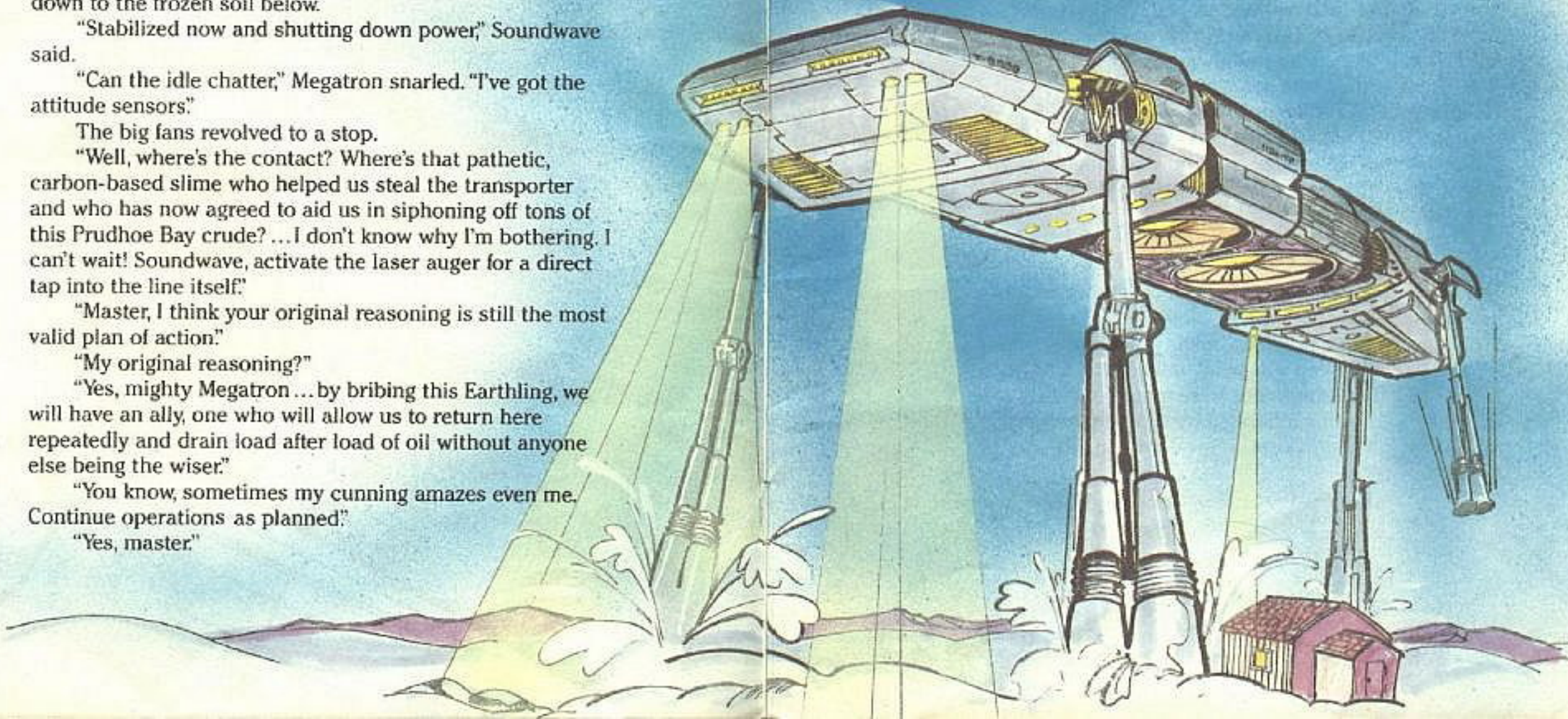
"Master, I think your original reasoning is still the most valid plan of action."

"My original reasoning?"

"Yes, mighty Megatron ...by bribing this Earthling, we will have an ally, one who will allow us to return here repeatedly and drain load after load of oil without anyone else being the wiser."

"You know, sometimes my cunning amazes even me. Continue operations as planned."

"Yes, master."



Giant winches ground powerfully, a gangway clanged open, and a ramp extended down to the ground. A huge loading hose snaked out of its port and was grabbed by two Decepticons, who coupled the end of it to a station outlet valve.

The Earthling who stepped out of the relay station to check on the operation glanced briefly at the transporter, then turned and went back inside.

"That fool is valuable to us only so long as he is useful," said Megatron after the man had disappeared.

"Yes, master."

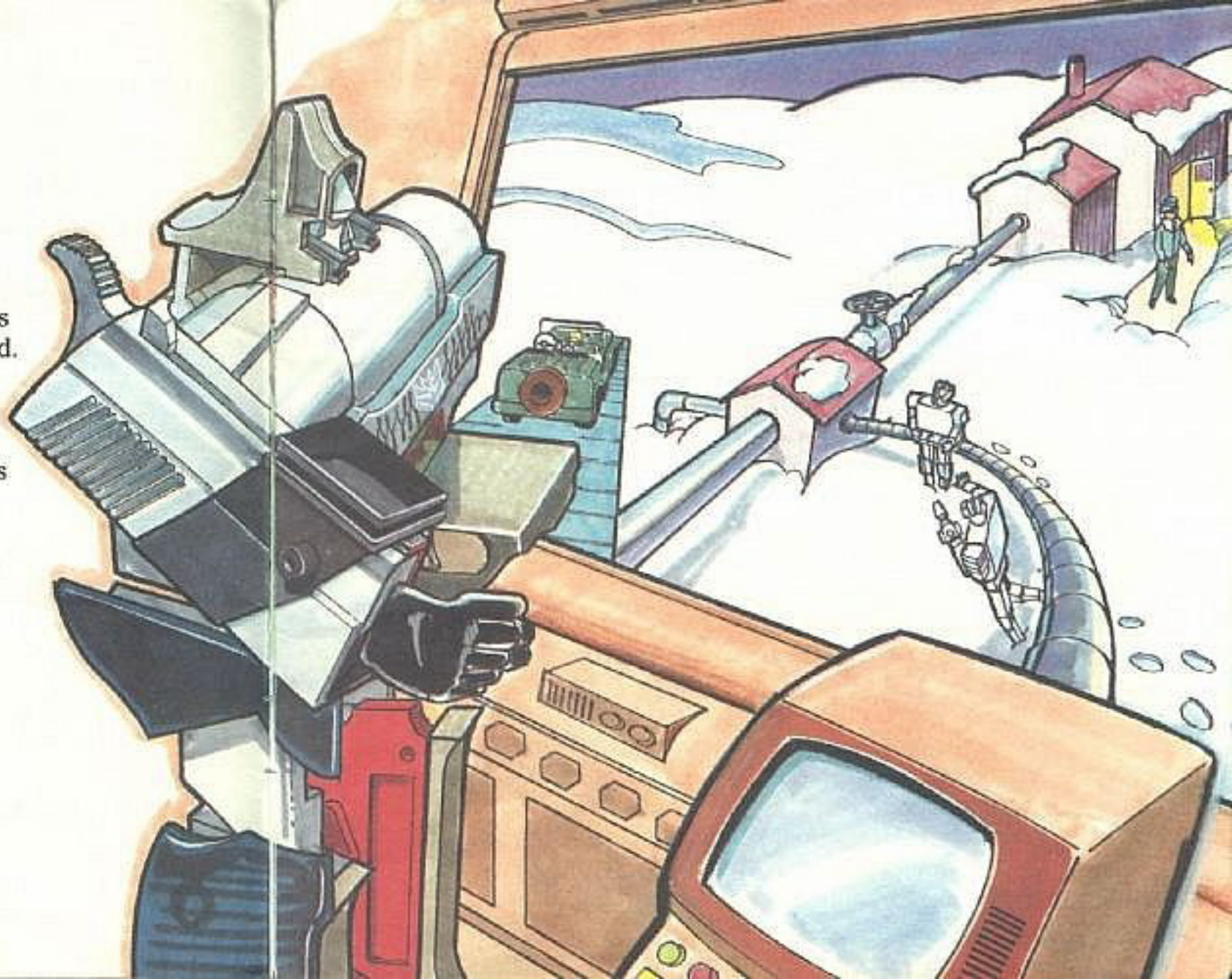
"And when he is no longer.."

"I understand, master."

"What worthless trinket was it that induced this betrayal of his people?"

"A desire for a new jeep, mighty Megatron."

As that very jeep was being unloaded from the transporter, the Decepticons were totally unaware that they were being infiltrated by an undercover Autobot spy. It was Hound, in his earthly mode as a jeep.



"Increase the flow rate of the oil, Soundwave," Megatron snarled.

"But, master, if we..."

"I have no more patience! I want it all ... now! Faster! Faster! My warriors need every drop of that lovely black juice to bathe their gears and fuel their engines! Total domination of the universe cannot wait on fools!"

"Yes, mighty Megatron."

As the enraged Earthling rushed out of the relay station, waving frantically to try to stop the speed-up, Megatron roared with laughter, then flattened him with an ion stun field from his fusion cannon.

Farther south, in Valdez, Alaska, the terminus of the pipeline, the oil flow slowed to a trickle ... then stopped. The oil company immediately sent out emergency signals, which were monitored by Prowl at Autobot field headquarters.

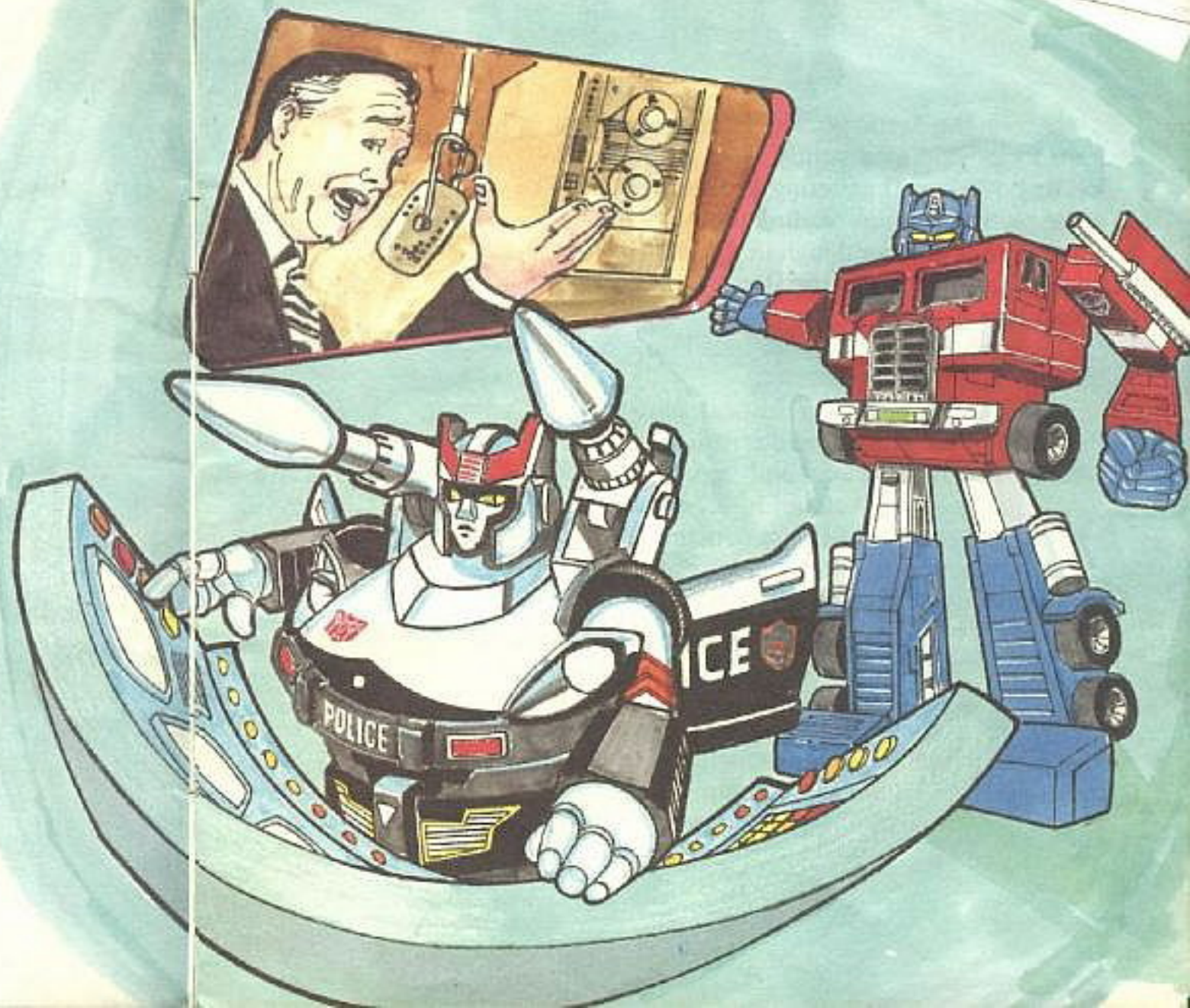
"Chief, the Decepticons have finally broken cover," Prowl informed Optimus Prime, the brave and wise Autobot leader.

"Excellent work, Prowl. Where are they?"

"Somewhere along the Alaska Pipeline."

"That's the best you can do? The pipeline is hundreds of miles long!"

"With the sketchy information at hand, chief, I'm lucky to ... wait a minute ... I'm receiving something ... Yes, it's Hound's signal, coming in strong and clear."



Above the Arctic Circle, the enormous oil transporter skimmed swiftly northward over the ice, its hoverfans thundering and throwing up white plumes of snow. Skyfire, the Autobot superjet that appeared high in the slate gray sky, reported its sighting of the Decepticon hovercraft to headquarters.

"Commence attack!" Optimus Prime ordered over the command frequency.

The superjet dove quickly, catching the Decepticons by surprise and unleashing a hail of heat-seeking missiles and null-rays.

"That sneaking Autobot junk heap!" Megatron raged. "Retaliate immediately!"

Megatron brought the full force of his terrible fusion cannon to bear, but Skyfire managed to avoid every blast.

"Do something!" screamed Megatron.

"Wait!" Soundwave yelled excitedly. "According to their transmissions, mighty Megatron, the jet has only enough fuel to remain over the target for a few more minutes!"



But those few minutes were long enough for Skyfire to release another barrage of missiles, null-rays and explosions. They ripped through the transporter from stem to stern. Its giant fans locked up tight and fused into useless lumps of metal. The huge ship bellied in hard on the ice.

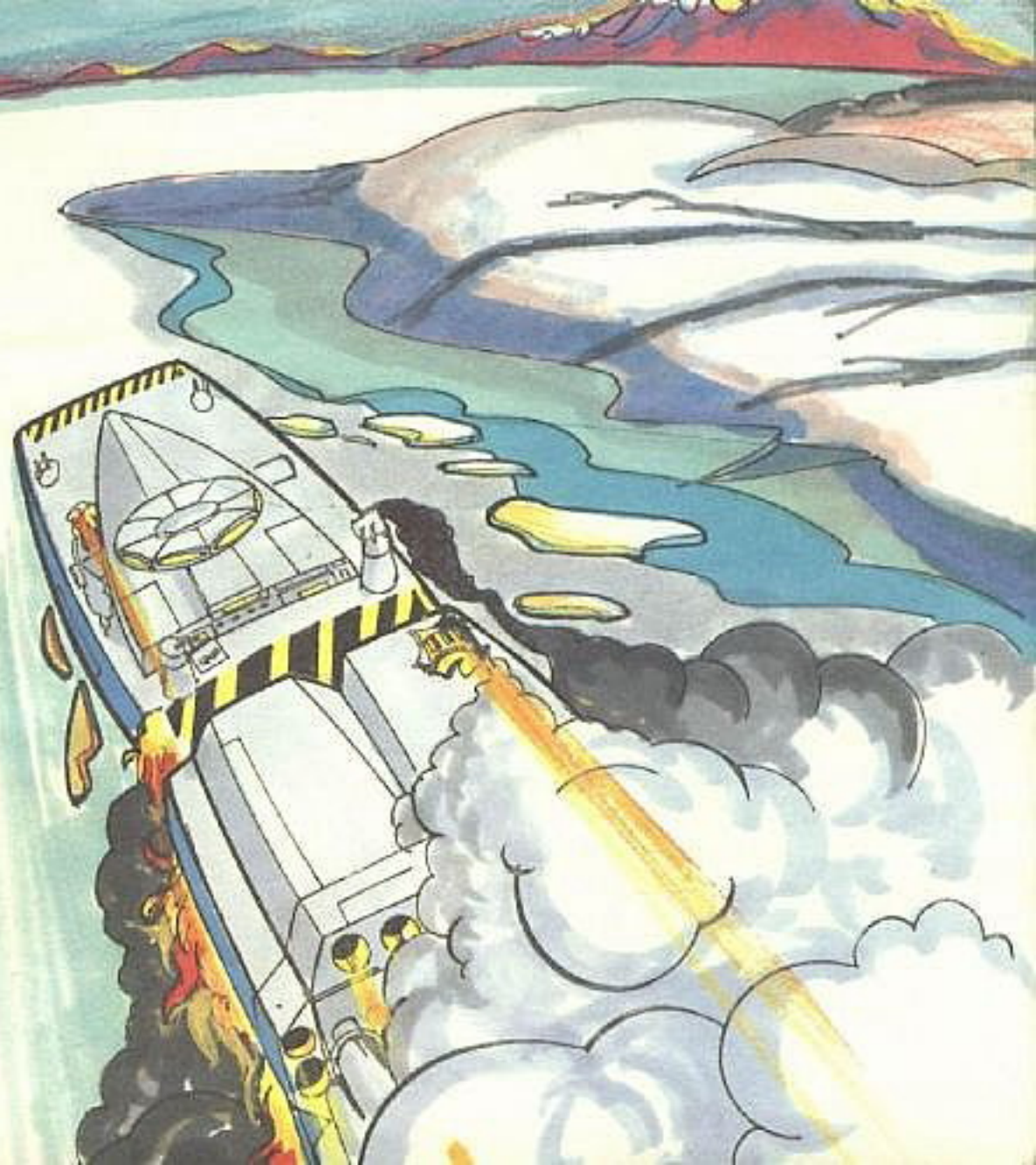
"May rust attack every joint in their miserable metal bodies!" Megatron roared.

"We'd better abandon ship, master!" Soundwave urged.

Outnumbered, and with common sense the better part of valor, the Decepticons prepared to flee their fire-consumed transporter.

"Activate the hyper-thrust afterburners!" Megatron ordered. "Fire!"

It was a foolish consumption of precious fuel, but necessary for escape from their Autobot pursuers... for the moment.



Once again, the Decepticons had eluded the righteous grasp of their Autobot pursuers and survived to wreak havoc another day. Leaving their oil transporter behind, a raging inferno on the ice, they had escaped capture and disappeared into the vast frozen reaches at the top of planet Earth.

In the dimness of the Autobot communications center, the numerous video monitors cast a greenish glow. Prowl studied one monitor carefully as Optimus Prime stood at his shoulder.

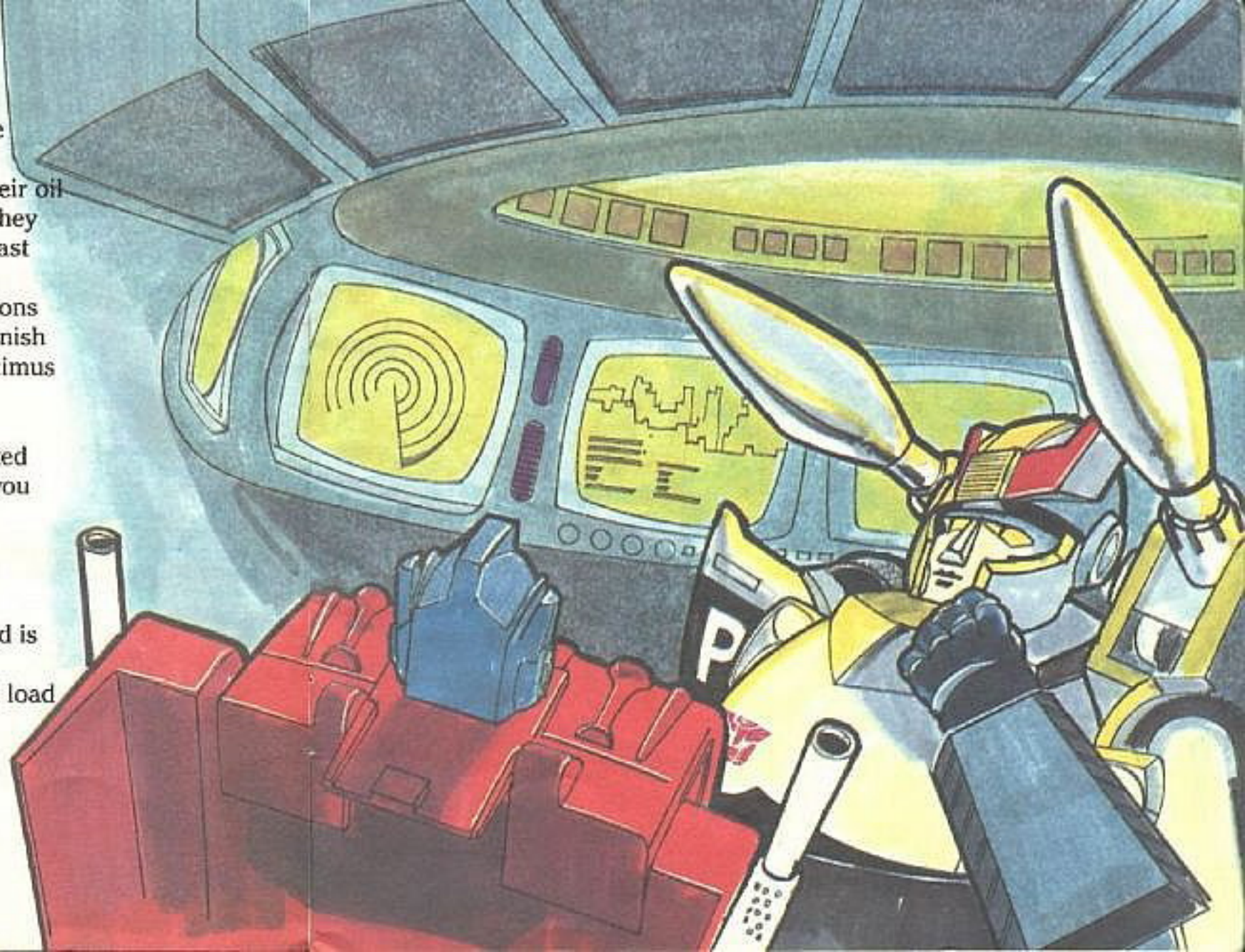
"Well, Prowl?" Optimus Prime urged.

"I can't tell ... it may have just been an isolated blip. But I'm never going to be able to do this if you insist on hovering over me, chief!"

"I don't understand. We sent up that sensor drone days ago. The Decepticons are out there somewhere!"

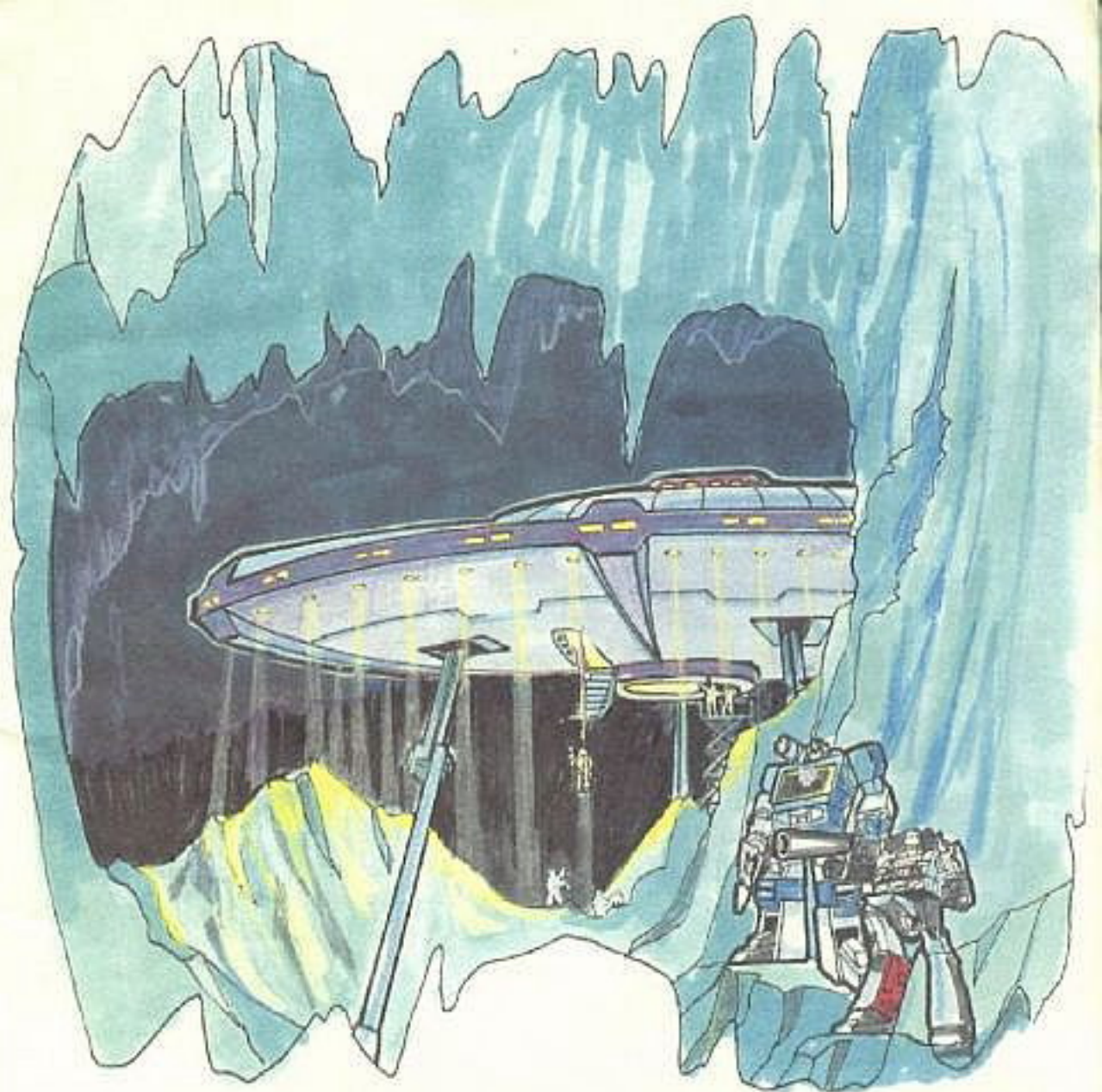
"We'll find them, chief, and remember, Hound is still at work too."

"Well, losing that oil transporter and its fuel load should have slowed down the Decepticons."



Meanwhile, hidden deep in an ice cave, Megatron surveyed the feverish activity in his northernmost systems-development center and fuel refinery. "Well, Soundwave?" he demanded. "How soon will it be ready? And I don't want to hear any more excuses!"

"Within the hour, master. Remember, this is a highly sophisticated piece of machinery we've stolen from the Earthlings, this multi-tracked, deep-sea oil transporter. And we've made it even more sophisticated by adding external laser-powered drilling capability and enough capacity to handle the total volume of the Prudhoe Bay reservoir."

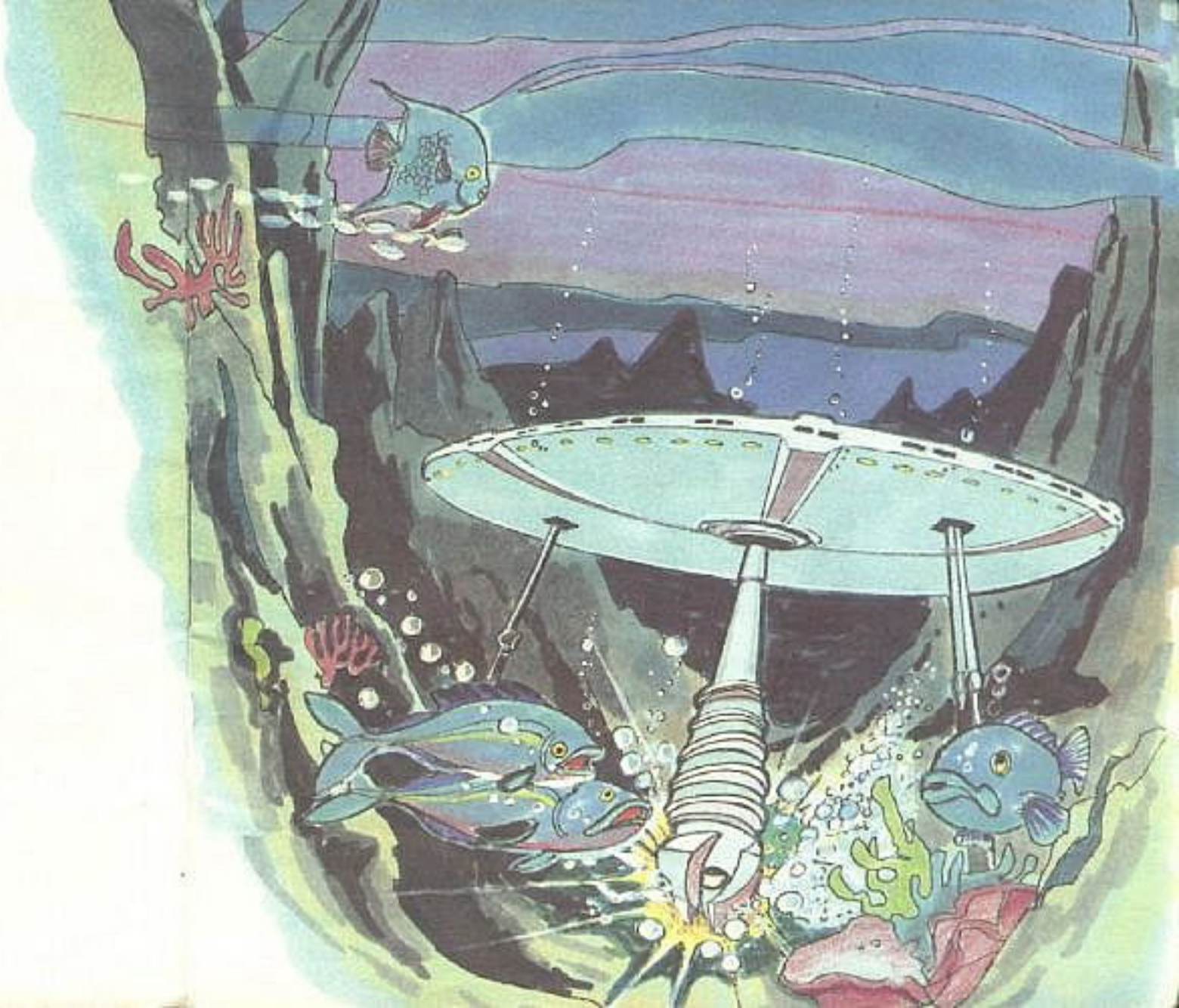


Easily withstanding the frigid temperature and crushing pressure at the vast depths beneath the Arctic Ocean, Megatron's monster transporter clawed its way across the sea bed.

Soundwave monitored the computer analyzer and listened intently to the sonar probe returning its data. He looked up and announced, "This is it, mighty Megatron. This is the perfect spot to begin drilling operations. It's the reservoir's lowest point, so all the oil will flow back here as we siphon off, putting less stress on our suction drives!"

"What are you waiting for then, Soundwave? Commence drilling immediately!"

The huge drilling arm telescoped out from its travel lock, and the enormous suction tube piggybacked it like some overgrown sea serpent. Then there was a blinding flash, and the concentrated heat of the laser bit turned the water around it into thousands of gaseous bubbles.





Far above, the oil pressure on the hundreds of oil rigs in the Prudhoe Bay field began dropping. Then the oil stopped flowing completely. Confusion reigned on all the rigs. Once again, the Valdez terminus ran dry. Confusion turned to apprehension at the headquarters of all the world's oil companies.

Soon, a real reason for panic arose. The reservoir, practically drained of all its oil, began collapsing in on itself. This was followed by huge sections of continental plates shifting and starting to move together. Northern Siberia slowly approached Alaska. Earthquakes shook the planet from pole to pole.



A huge crack opened from the Arctic Ocean to the Yukon and the icy waters rushed in. Volcanoes, long dormant, erupted on both sides of the Pacific Ocean.

With the enormous loss and destruction, both Russia and the West looked to place blame, each certain that the other had caused this catastrophe for their own ends. Threats on both sides became stronger, and the world stood on the brink of thermo-nuclear war. The entire fuel supply of the planet was threatened with radioactive contamination! Only the Autobots could save the Earth, but they would have to act quickly!

All Autobot eyes were on Optimus Prime. Only his vast knowledge and resources could stop the disaster threatening the planet Earth – a disaster that was very much like the one that had befallen his beloved Cybertron.

"Prowl, have you found out where the Decepticons are pumping from yet?"

"No, chief. The underwater sensor drone can work only so fast."

"We cannot wait any longer. But I have an idea... a solution... and it may help us flush those mechanical rats from their hole as well."

"What's that, chief?"

"Liquified razon gas."

"Of course!" Prowl exclaimed.

Optimus Prime continued. "In its liquid state, razon possesses a greater density than crude oil. Therefore, if we pump it into the empty reservoir, it will force the oil now in the Decepticon transporter back into the reservoir and restore the Earth's geography to its former state."

"And its liquid half-life is only a matter of hours. Then it becomes a gas again!"

"Exactly, Prowl – a gas that should force that Decepticon oil guzzler to the surface of the ocean to face..."

"Our missiles!"



"Do something!" Megatron demanded.

"I'm trying, master! I'm trying!" Soundwave exclaimed as he pushed and pulled every combination of buttons and levers that were available to him.

But nothing worked. The transporter was surfacing, and nothing was going to stop that.

"Surface in five seconds, master!"

"You blundering tape-filled idiot!"

"It's the gas, mighty Megatron! It's the razon gas that's doing it!"

"Reasons are excuses! I want results!"

"We're surfaced now, mighty Megatron!"

"Arrgghh!"

Optimus Prime waited for Megatron to make his move, but there was only silence from the floating oil transporter. However, an Autobot boarding party encountered a time-delay booby-trap attached to the deck hatchway. When it went off, two members of the boarding party were sent back to visit Ratchet for repairs.

"Inside the transporter, the other Autobots discovered that the Decepticon command module pod was gone. Once more, Megatron had managed to elude a just fate. But he had left his message across the screen of an idling computer monitor whose voice readout kept repeating, "A Decepticon universe is at hand ... A Decepticon universe is at hand..."

And the battle continues....



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