

TRANSFORMERS:

RETRIBUTION



CHAPTER NINE


ANARCHY IS LOOSED UPON THE WORLD



This is it. We're within three kilometers of Grimlock's distress call. Autobots, transform!





A photograph of several Transformers action figures in a snowy, wooded environment. The figures are in various poses, some standing and some in vehicle modes. The scene is set in a snowy field with some bare trees in the background. Two speech bubbles are overlaid on the image, containing text that appears to be from a script or dialogue. The first speech bubble is at the top left, and the second is at the bottom center.

Keep your sensors on max
passive sensitivity, 'Bots.

No comm traffic either. I've got my
radio detectors at full sensitivity.





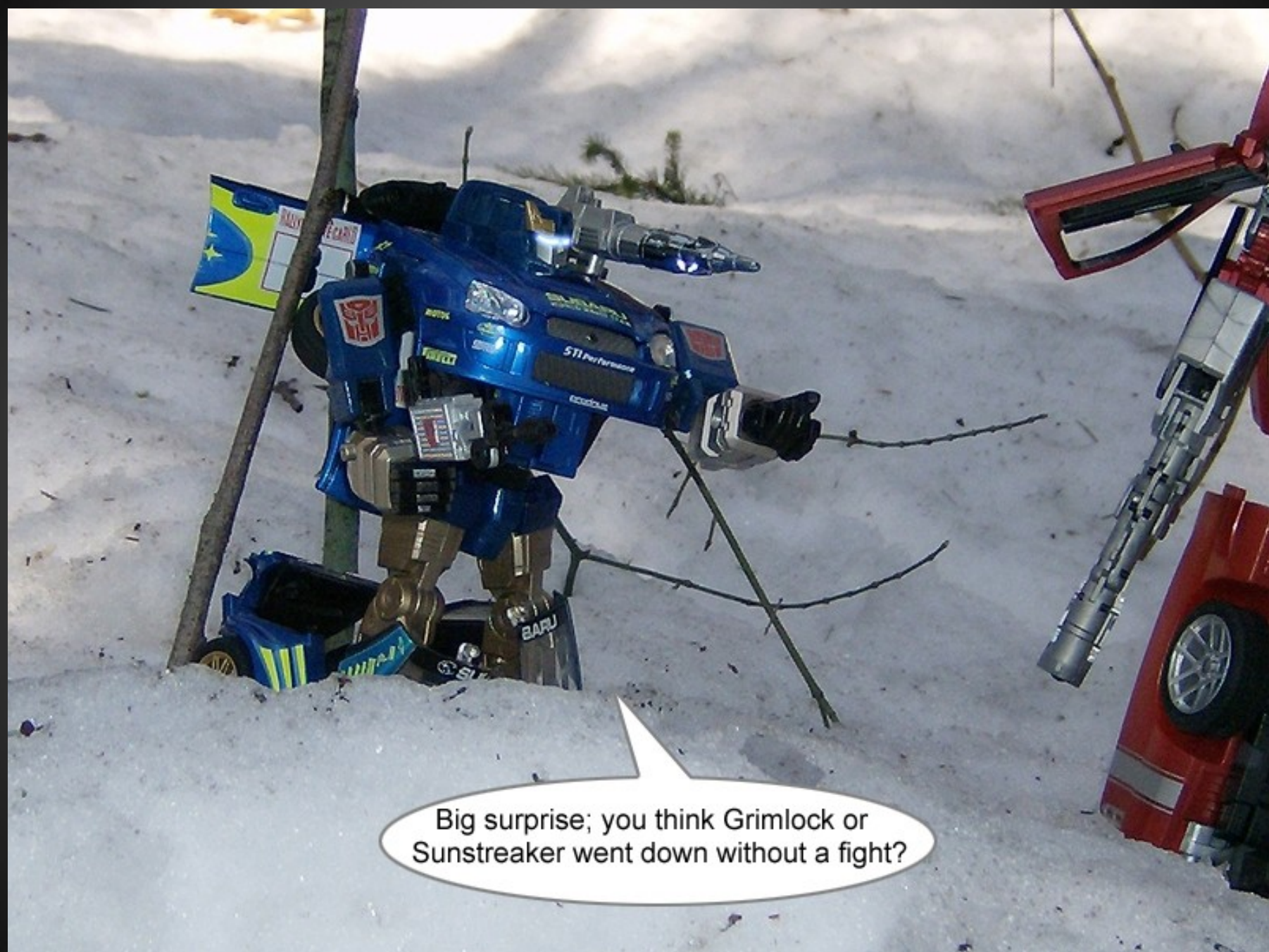
Weird...Prowl?





Yes?


I'm picking up minute traces of Cherenkov radiation.



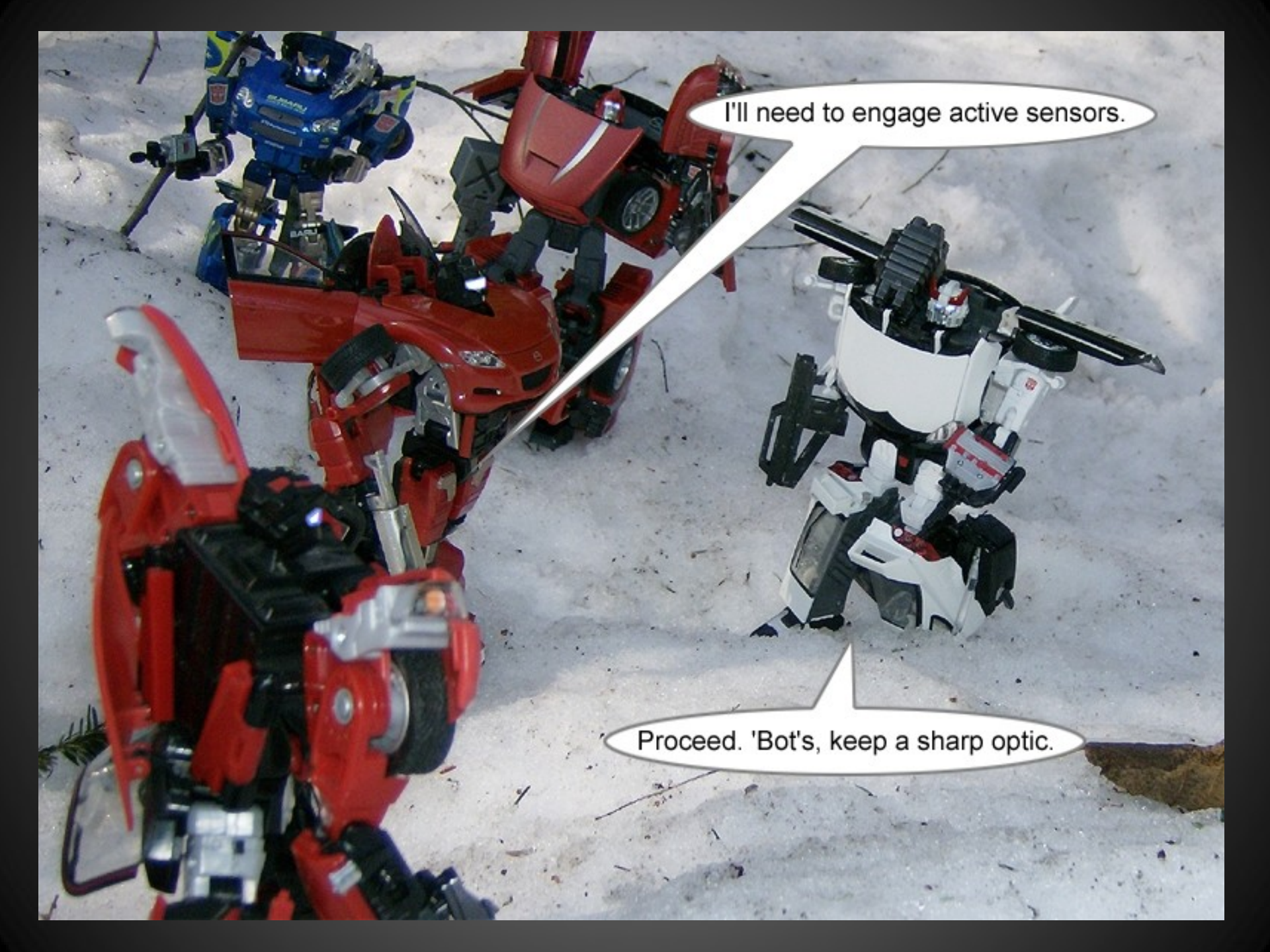
Big surprise; you think Grimlock or Sunstreaker went down without a fight?

No, no, it's...weird. It's not like the Cherenkov signature from particle weapons.





Autobots, halt. Overdrive,
divert your run-time to analysis.



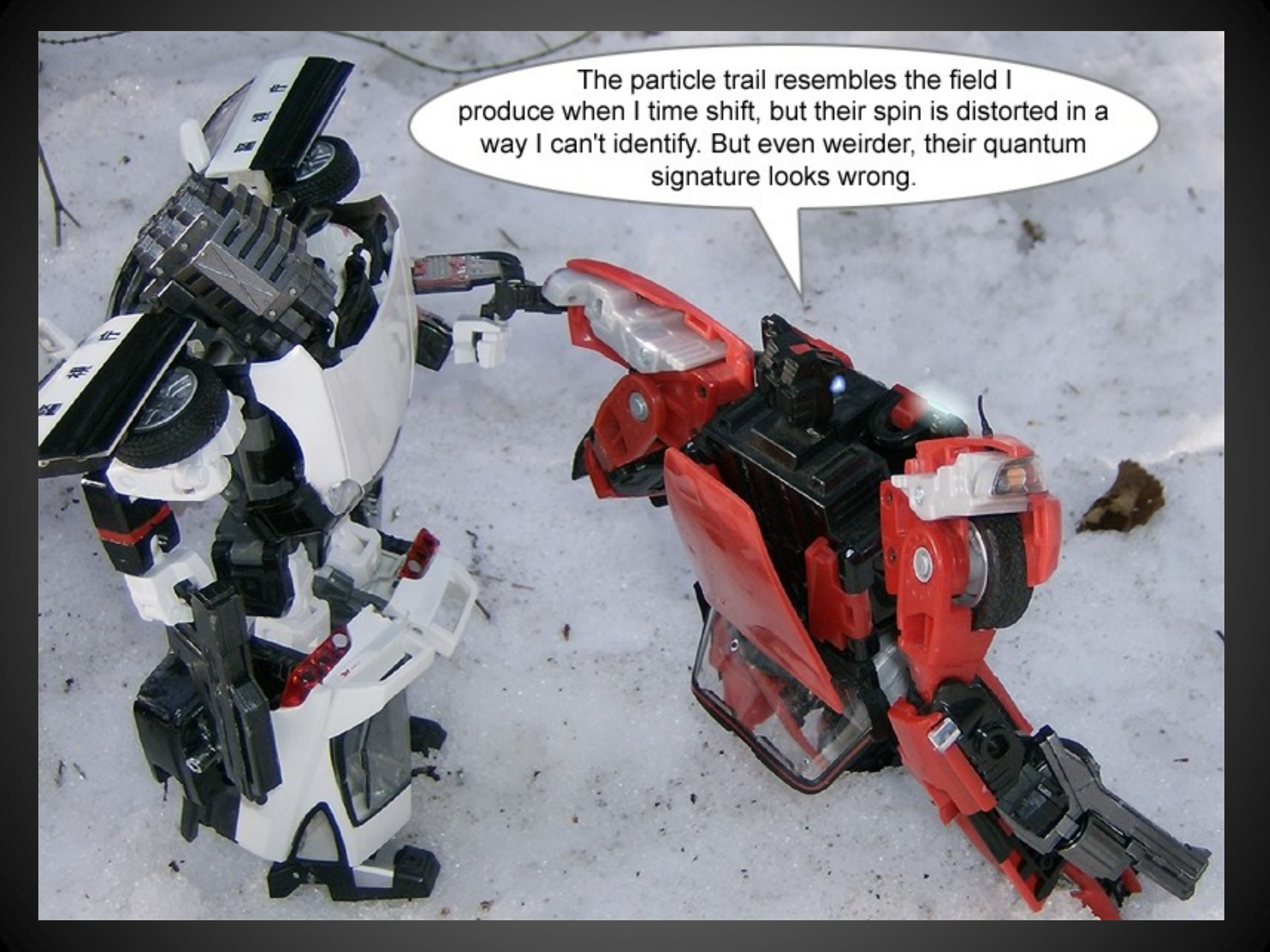
I'll need to engage active sensors.

Proceed. 'Bot's, keep a sharp optic.

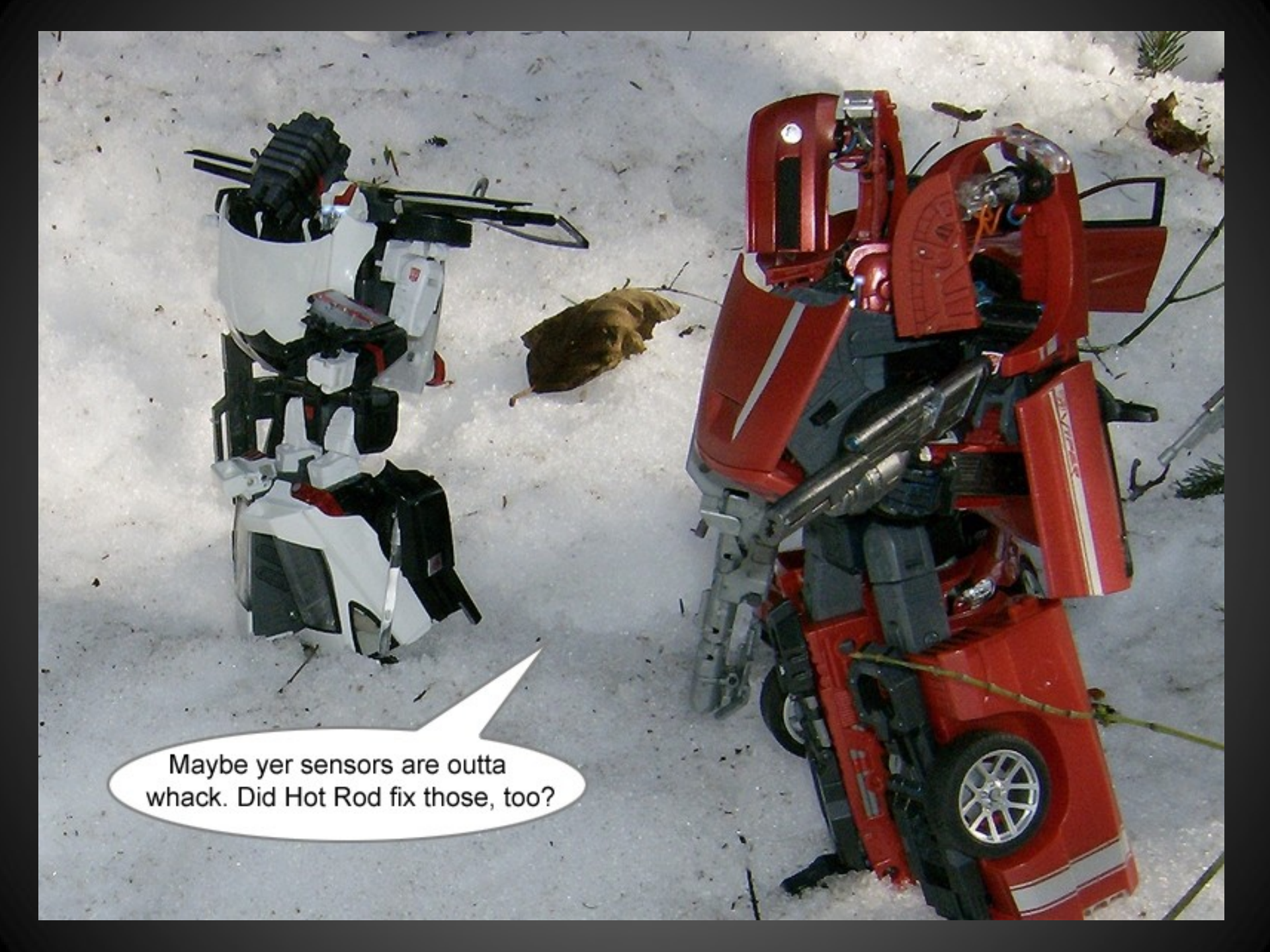
Complying.







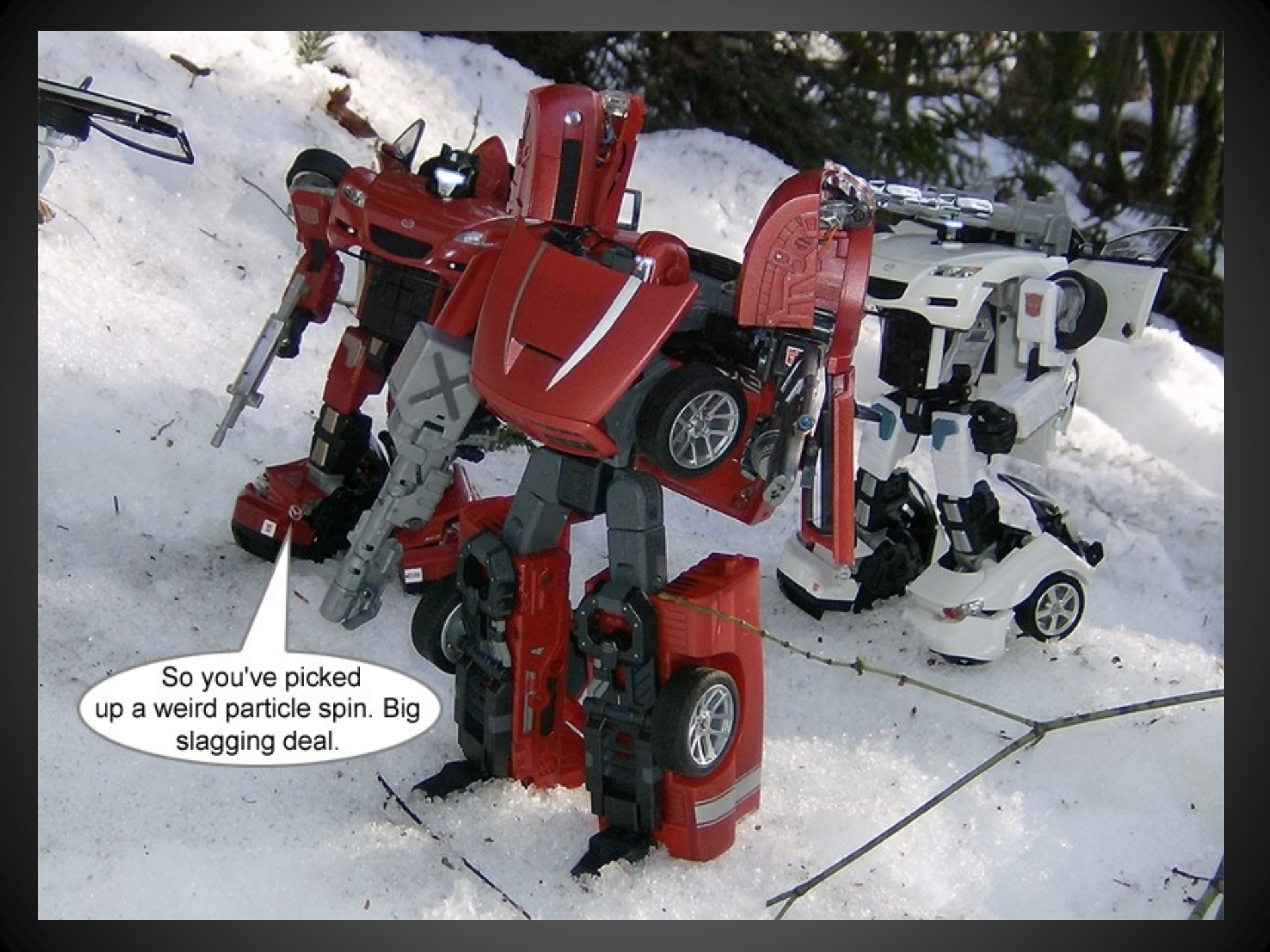
The particle trail resembles the field I produce when I time shift, but their spin is distorted in a way I can't identify. But even weirder, their quantum signature looks wrong.

A photograph of two damaged Transformers toys lying on a snowy surface. On the left is a white and black Transformer, possibly a Decepticon, with its head and upper body separated from the rest of the body. On the right is a red Transformer, possibly a Hot Rod, which is more intact but shows signs of damage, particularly to its head and upper body. A single brown leaf lies between the two toys. A speech bubble is positioned at the bottom left of the image.

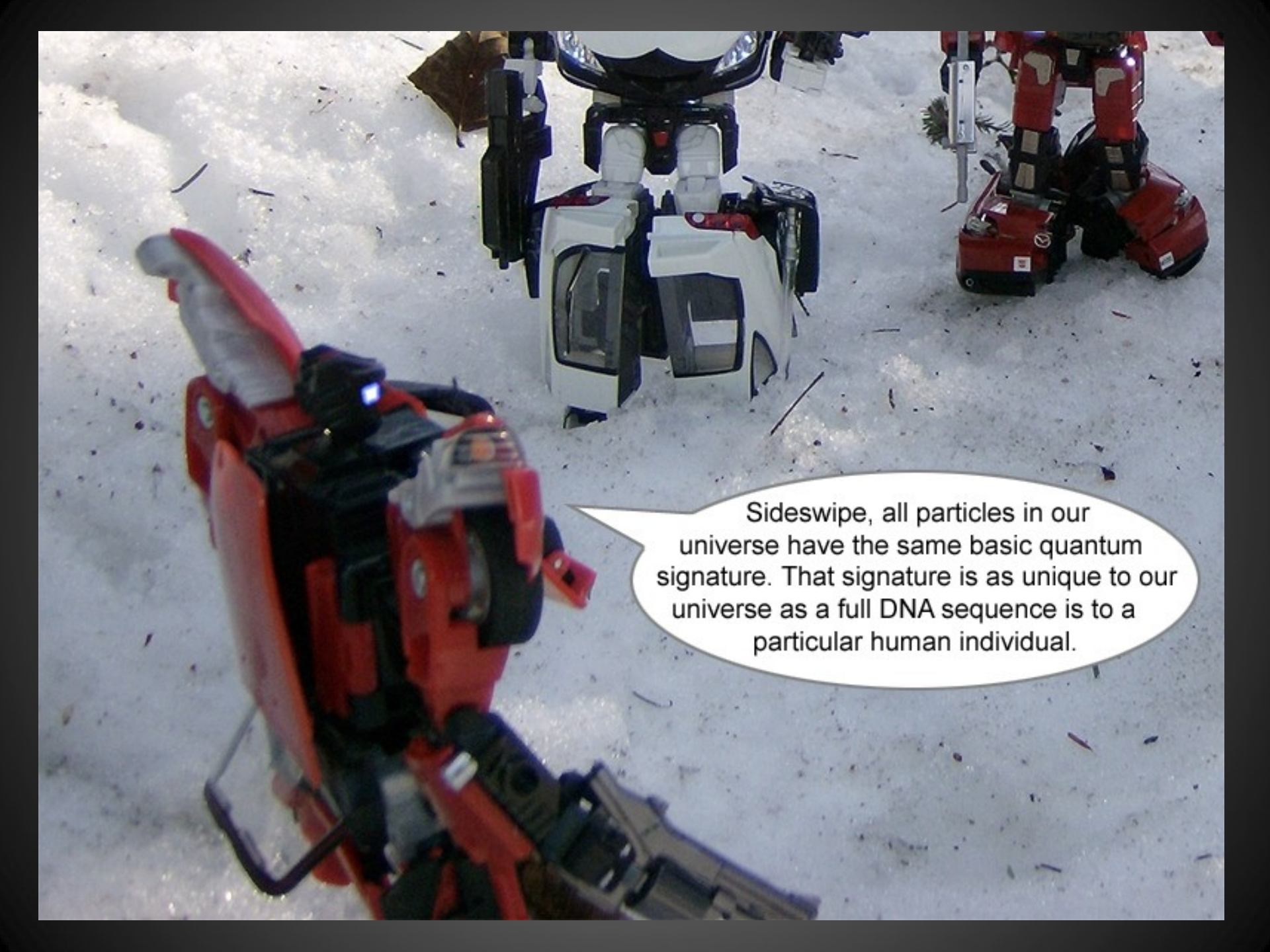
Maybe yer sensors are outta
whack. Did Hot Rod fix those, too?

Ratchet ran a diagnostic
before we left. They're fine.

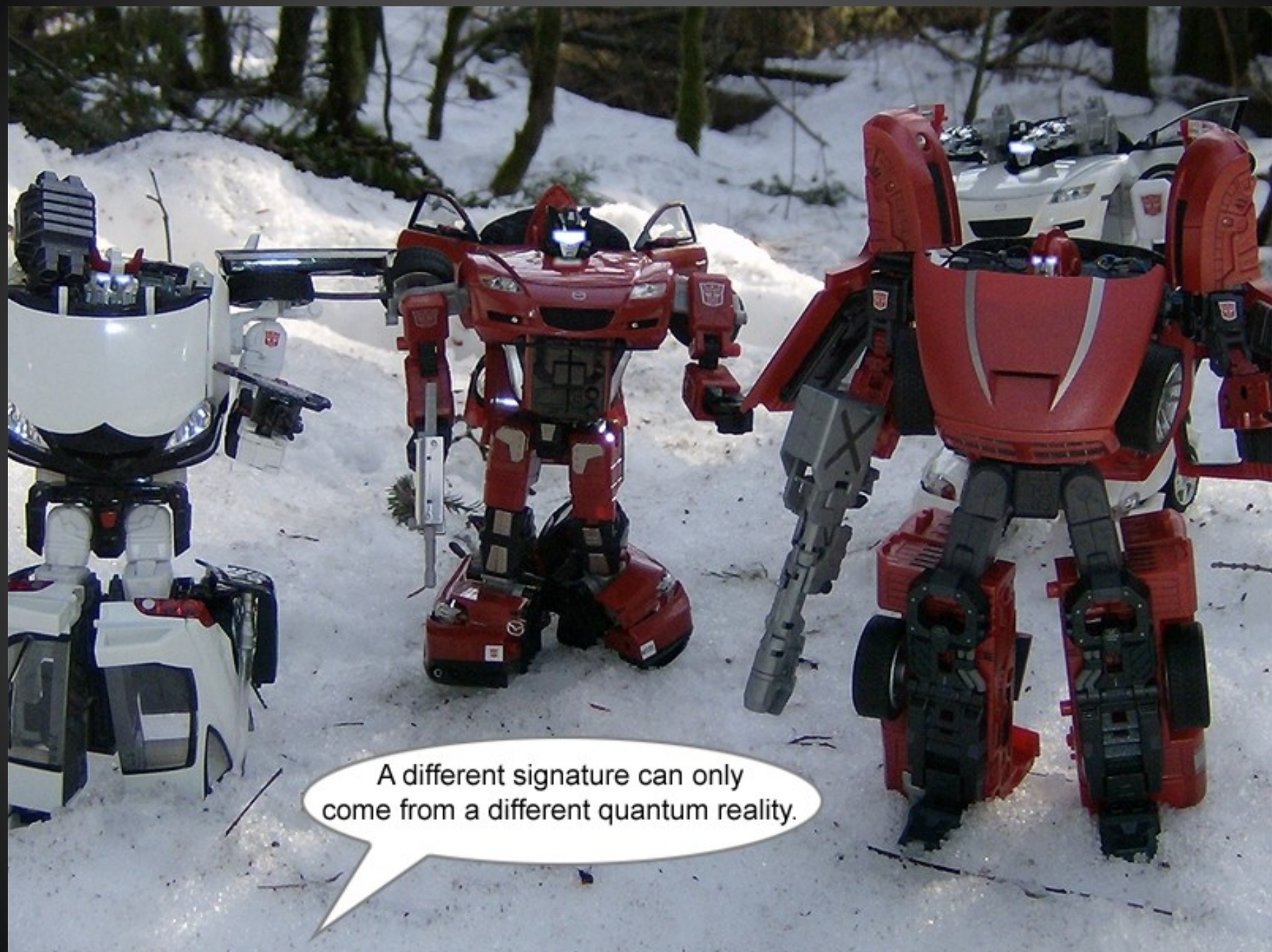


A photograph of two Transformers robots in a snowy outdoor setting. On the left is a large red robot, Optimus Prime, in his robot mode. He is holding a grey and black rifle. To his right is a smaller white robot, Bumblebee, also in his robot mode. The ground is covered in snow, and some evergreen trees are visible in the background. A speech bubble originates from the red robot.

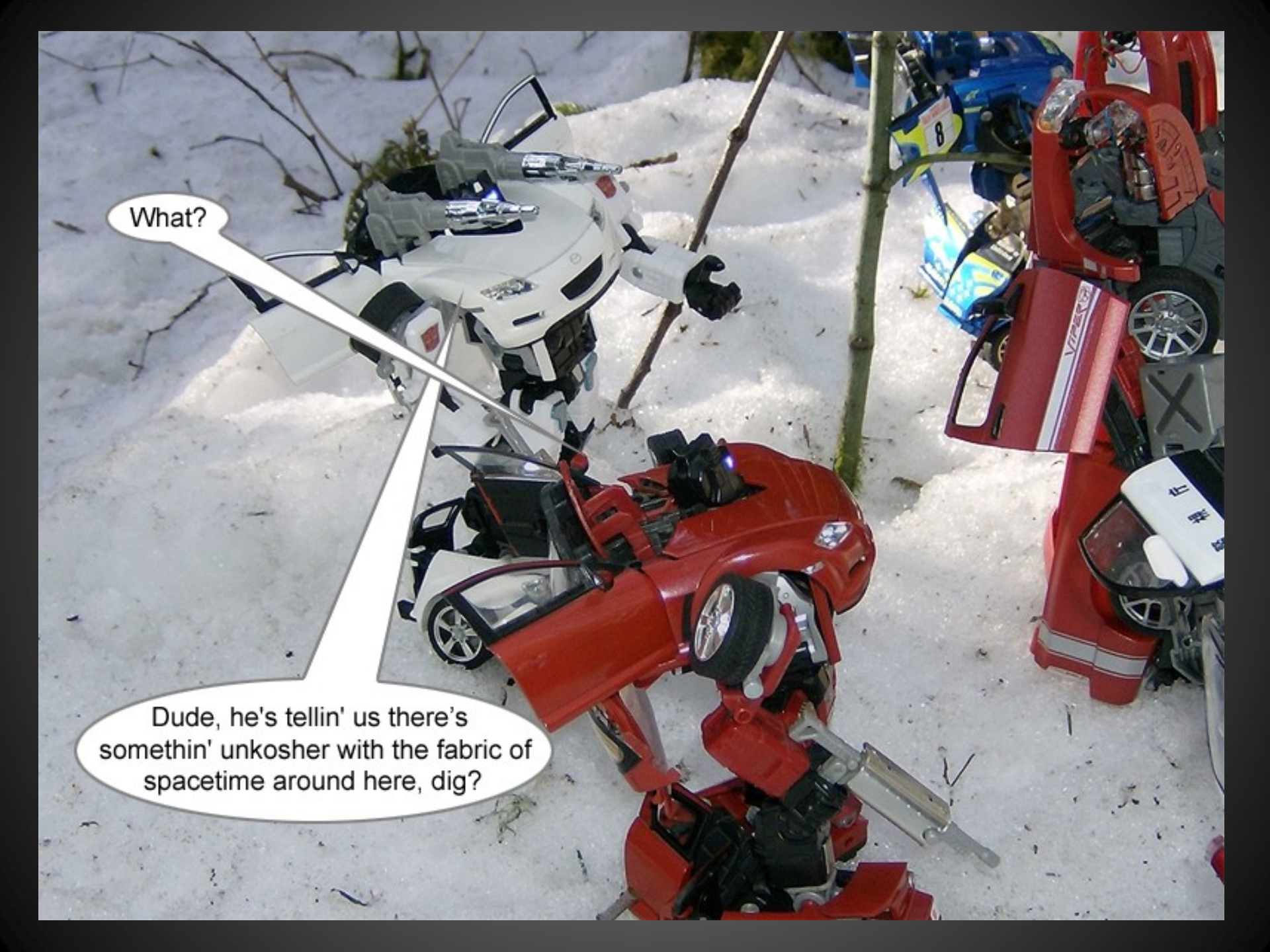
So you've picked
up a weird particle spin. Big
slagging deal.

A photograph of three Transformers toys on a snowy surface. In the foreground, a red Transformer (Optimus Prime) is lying on its back. In the background, a white Transformer (Megatron) and another red Transformer (Bumblebee) are standing. A speech bubble is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Sideswipe, all particles in our universe have the same basic quantum signature. That signature is as unique to our universe as a full DNA sequence is to a particular human individual.




A different signature can only
come from a different quantum reality.

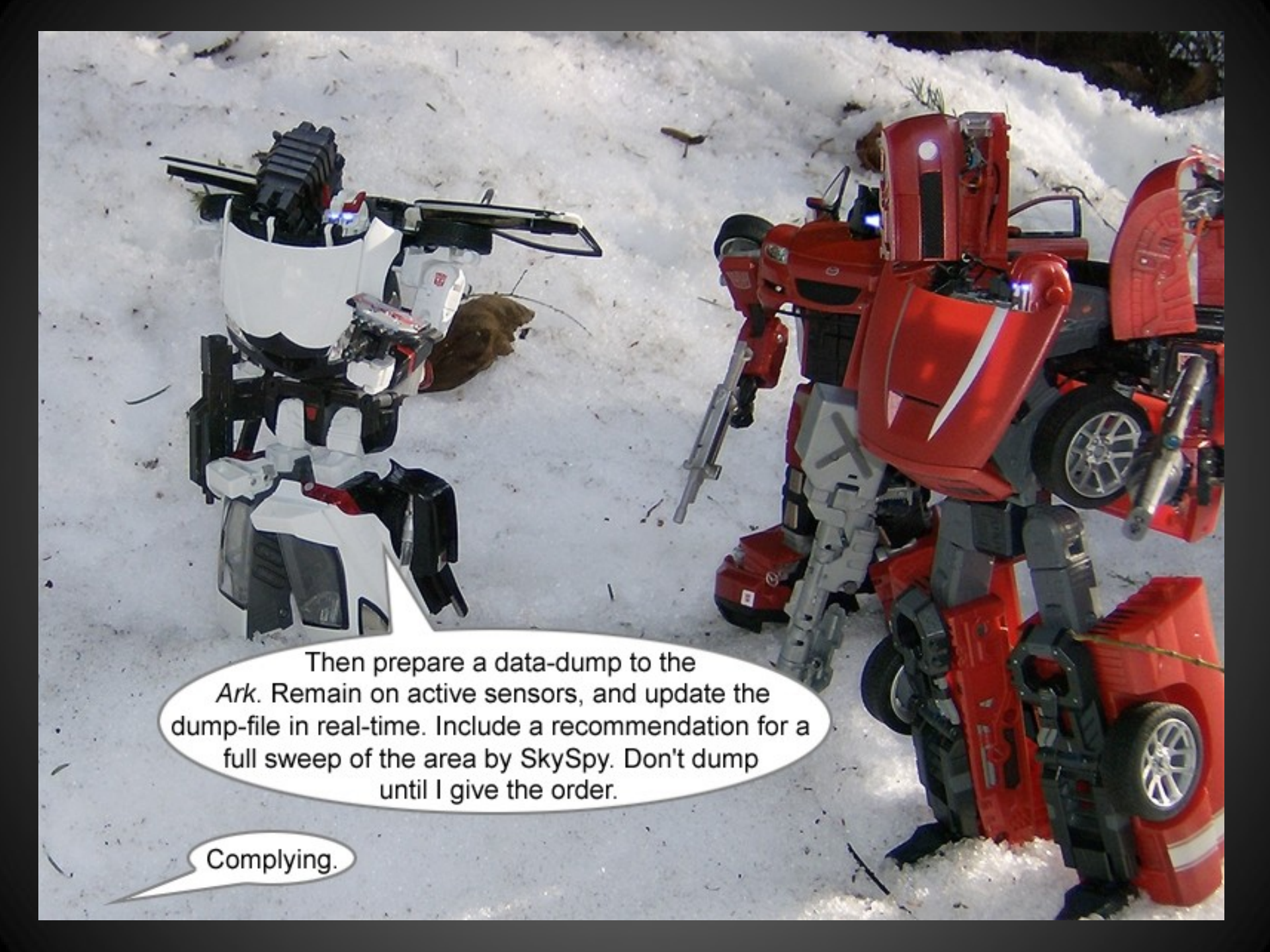


What?

Dude, he's tellin' us there's
somethin' unkosher with the fabric of
spacetime around here, dig?

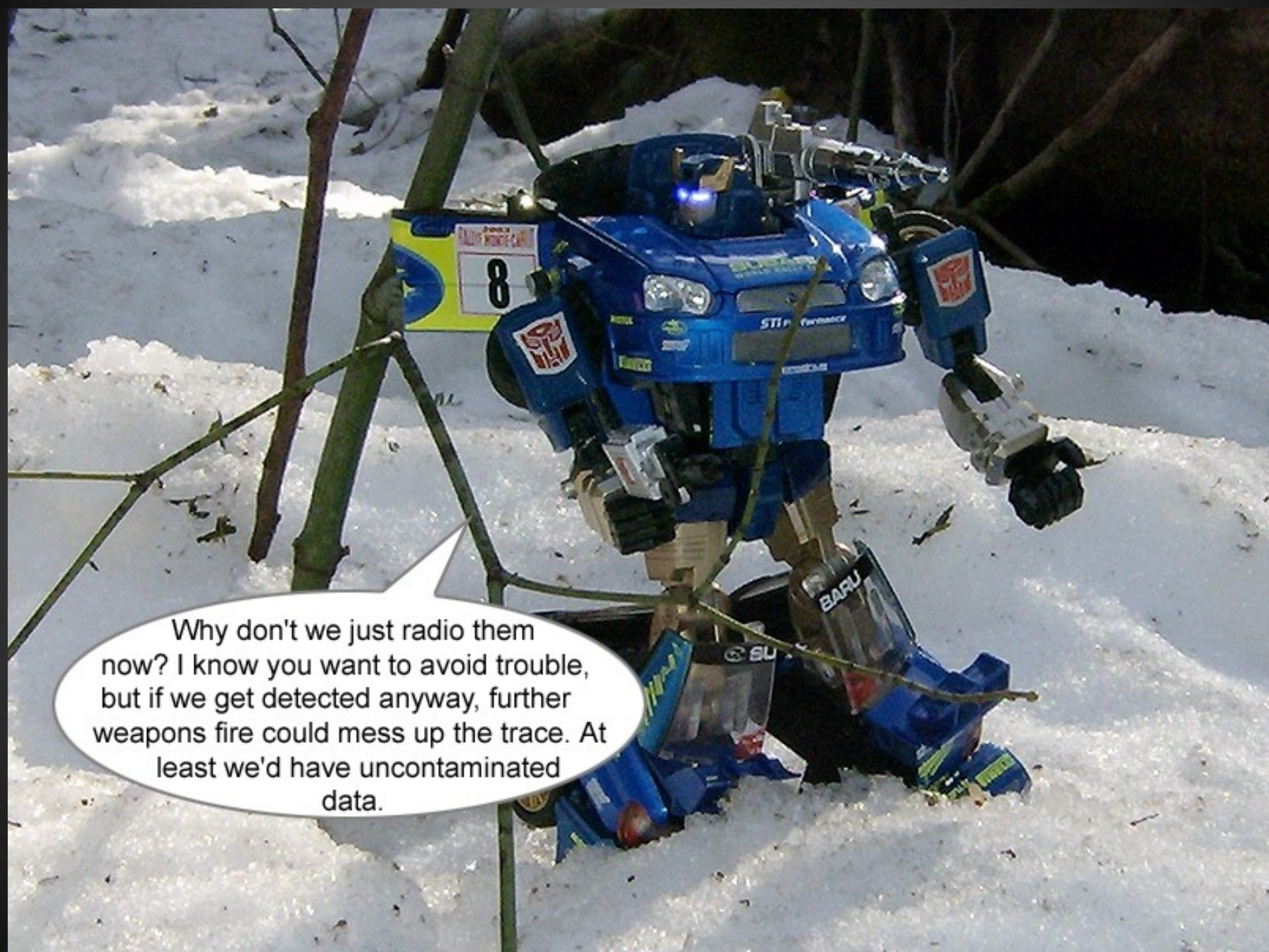
A red and black Transformers toy robot, Skids, is lying on its back in a snowy environment. The robot's head is tilted back, and its eyes are glowing blue. Its arms are bent at the elbows, and its legs are also bent. The robot's body is primarily red with black and silver accents. A speech bubble is positioned above the robot's head.

Skids could make
more out of it than I.



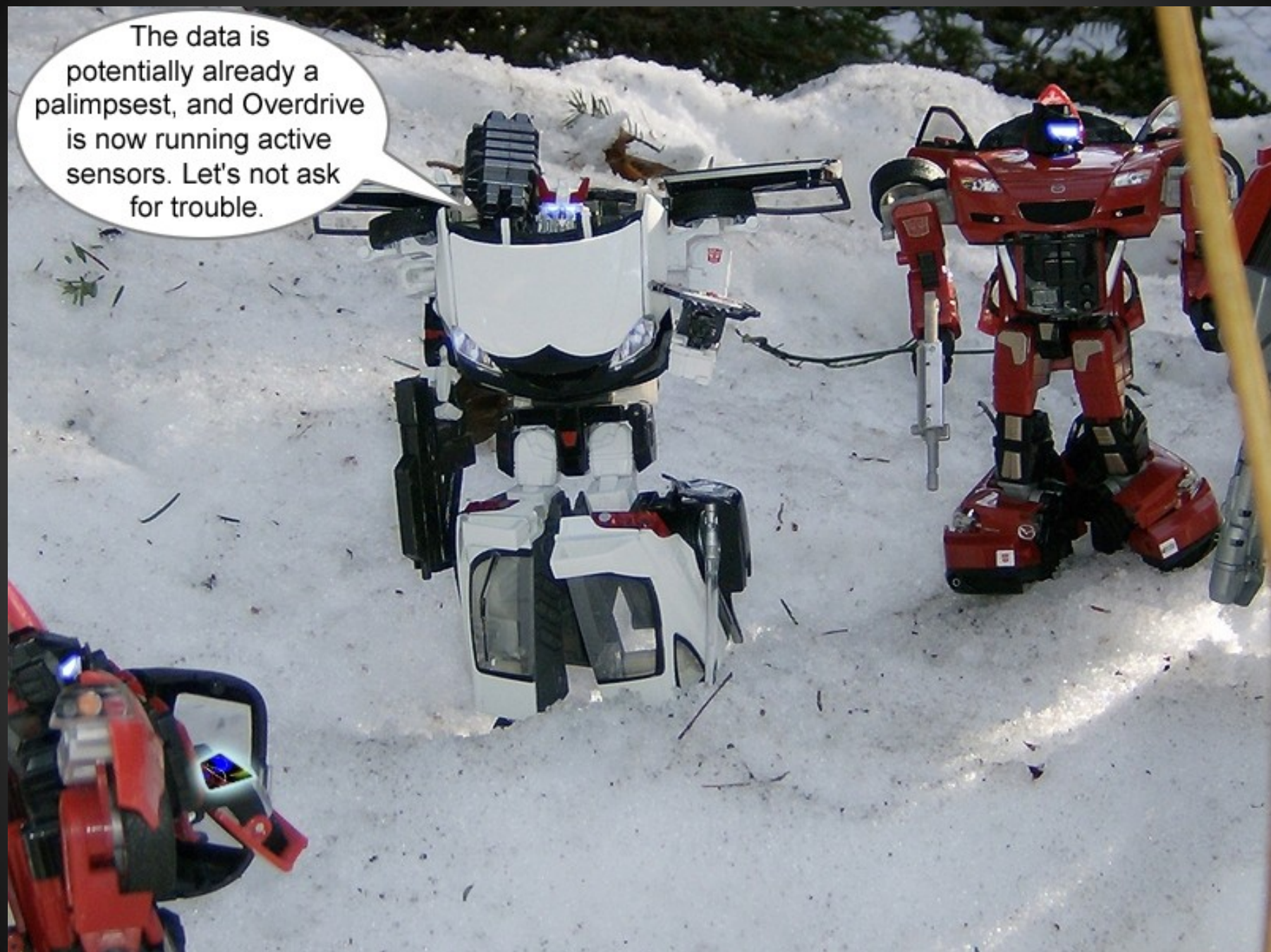
Then prepare a data-dump to the Ark. Remain on active sensors, and update the dump-file in real-time. Include a recommendation for a full sweep of the area by SkySpy. Don't dump until I give the order.

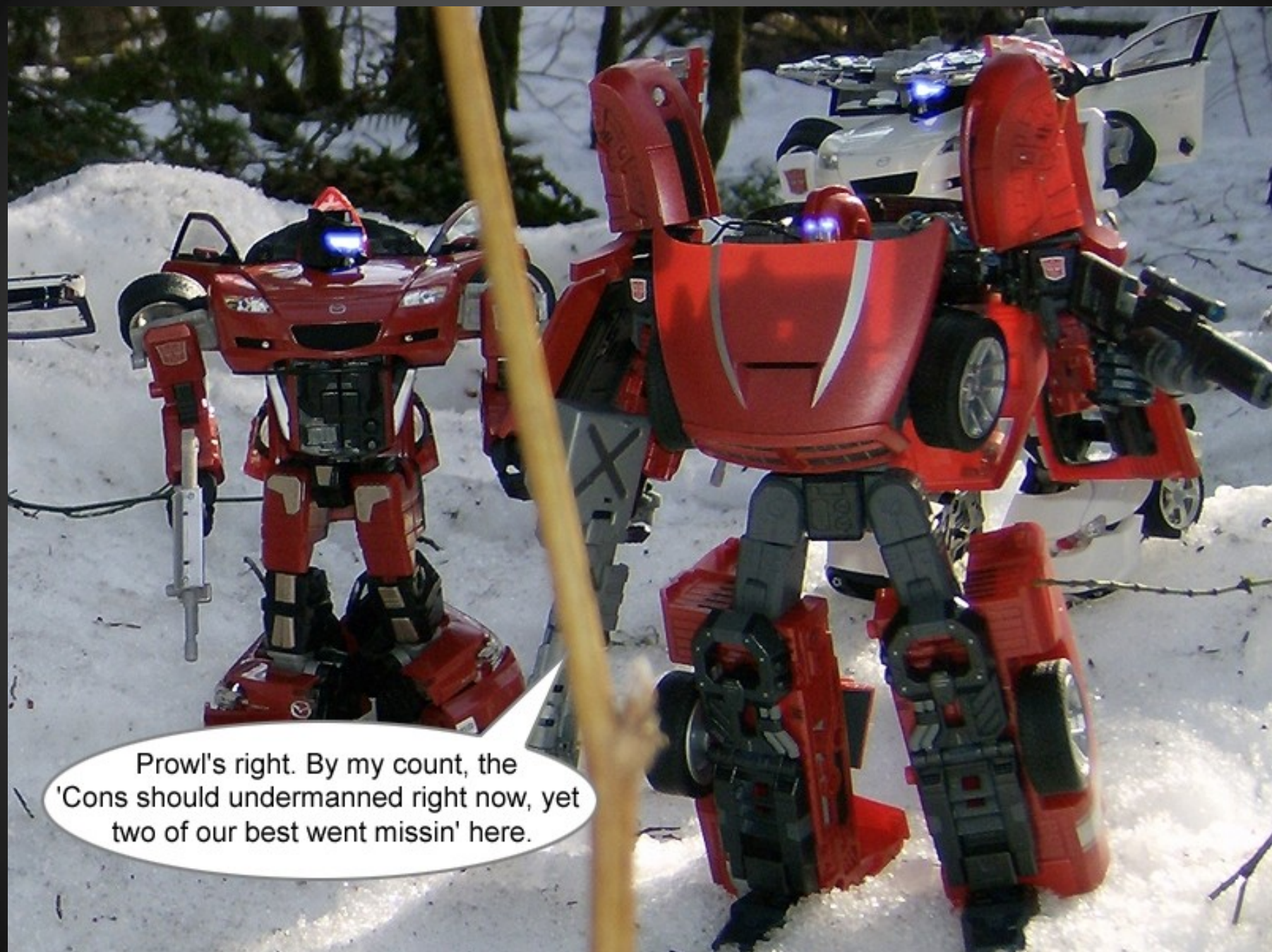
Complying.



Why don't we just radio them now? I know you want to avoid trouble, but if we get detected anyway, further weapons fire could mess up the trace. At least we'd have uncontaminated data.

The data is potentially already a palimpsest, and Overdrive is now running active sensors. Let's not ask for trouble.



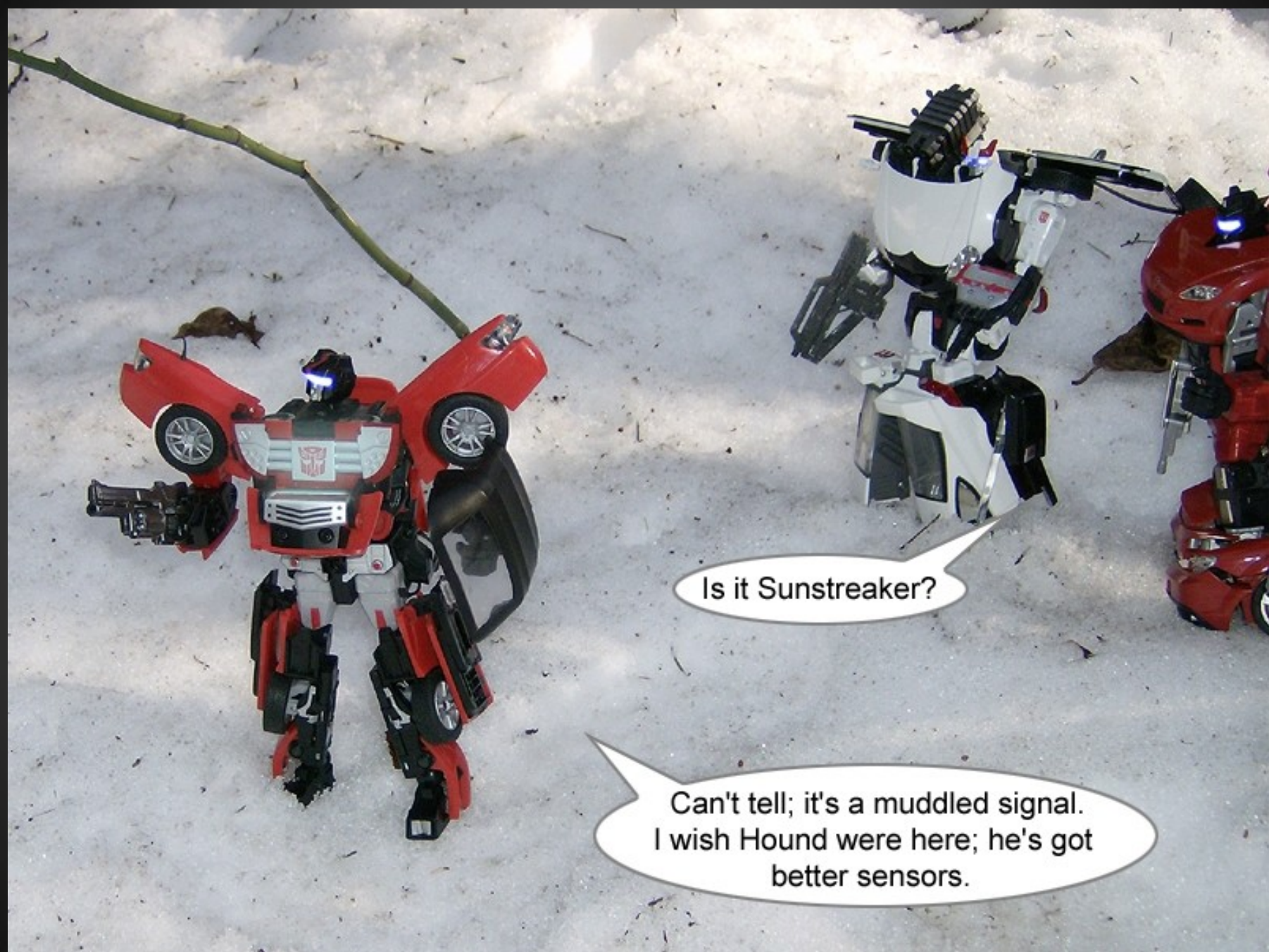


Prowl's right. By my count, the 'Cons should be outnumbered right now, yet two of our best went missing here.



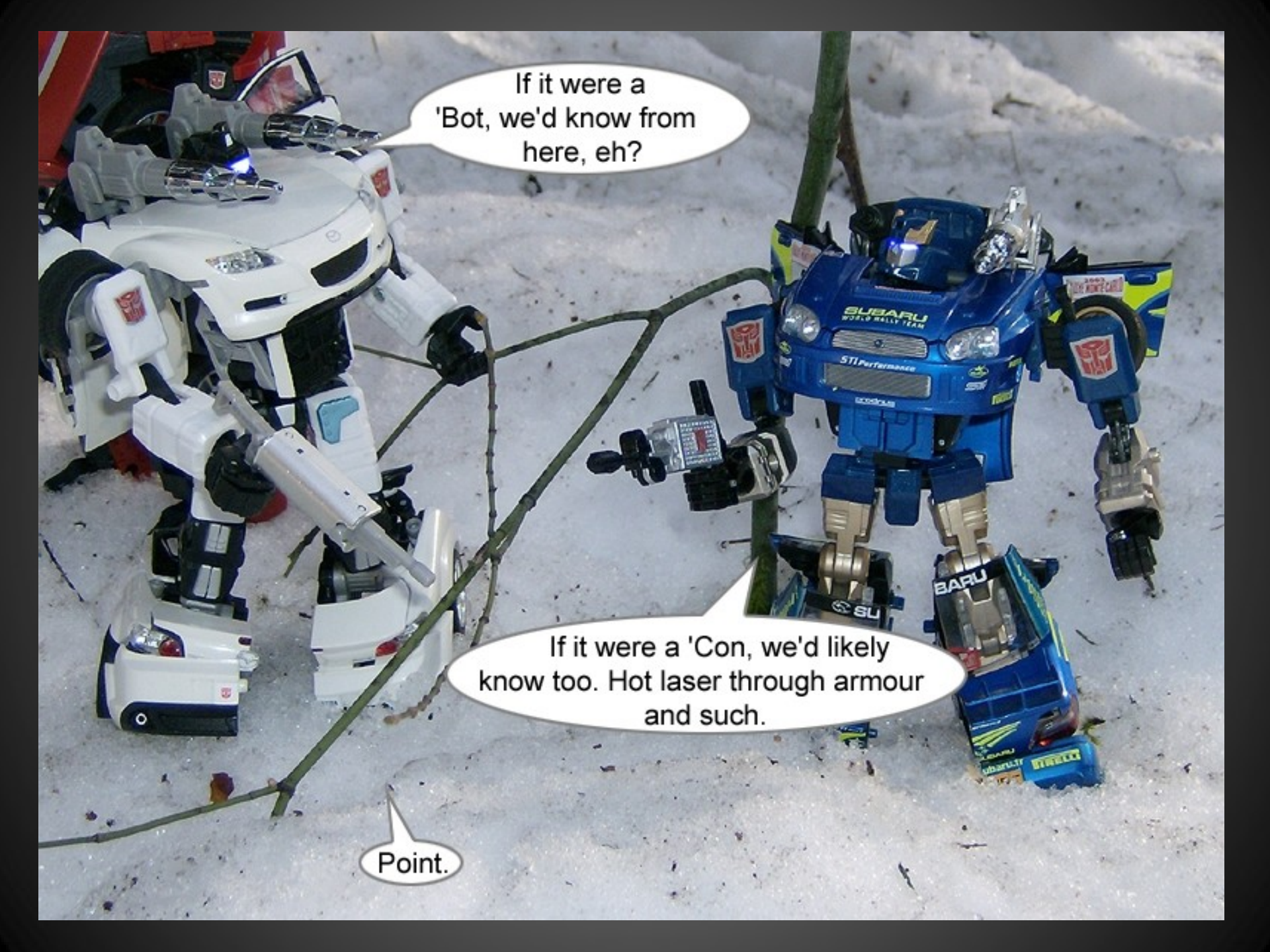
A photograph of a snowy forest floor. The ground is covered in a layer of white snow, with some small evergreen branches and dry twigs scattered across it. In the background, there is a dense forest of tall, thin trees with bare branches. A speech bubble is overlaid on the bottom center of the image.

The trace is beyond that rise.



Is it Sunstreaker?

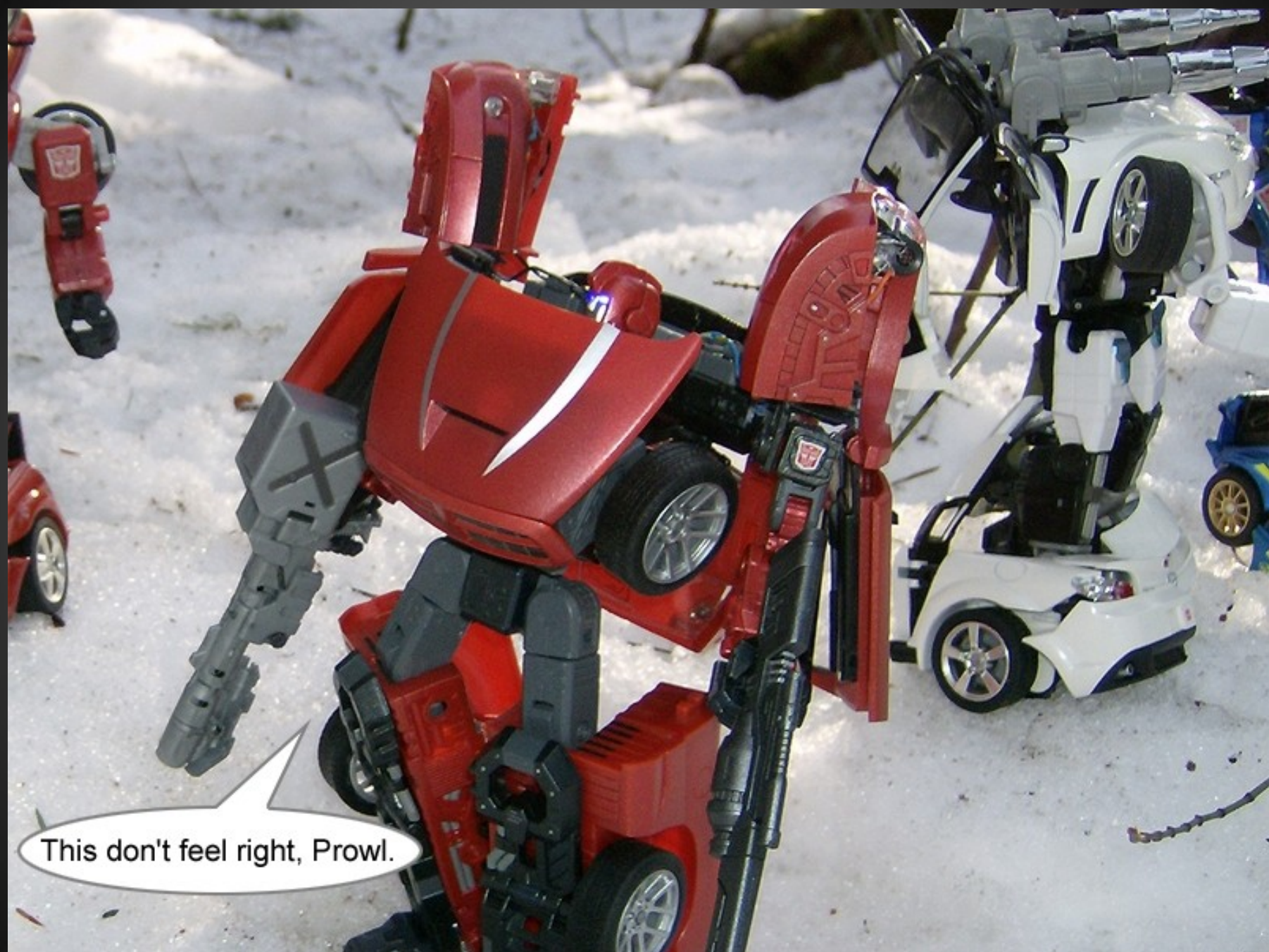
Can't tell; it's a muddled signal.
I wish Hound were here; he's got
better sensors.

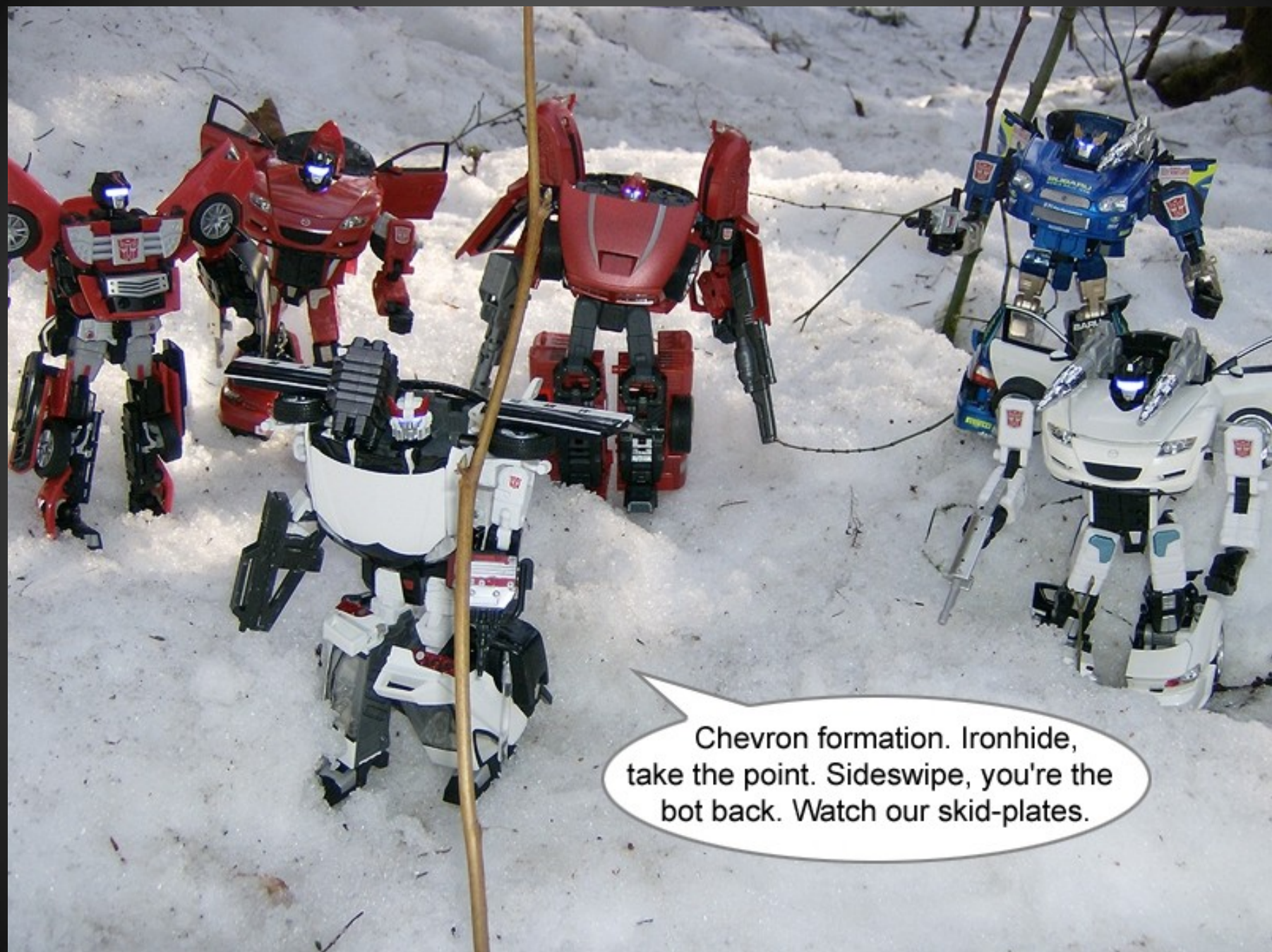


If it were a
'Bot, we'd know from
here, eh?

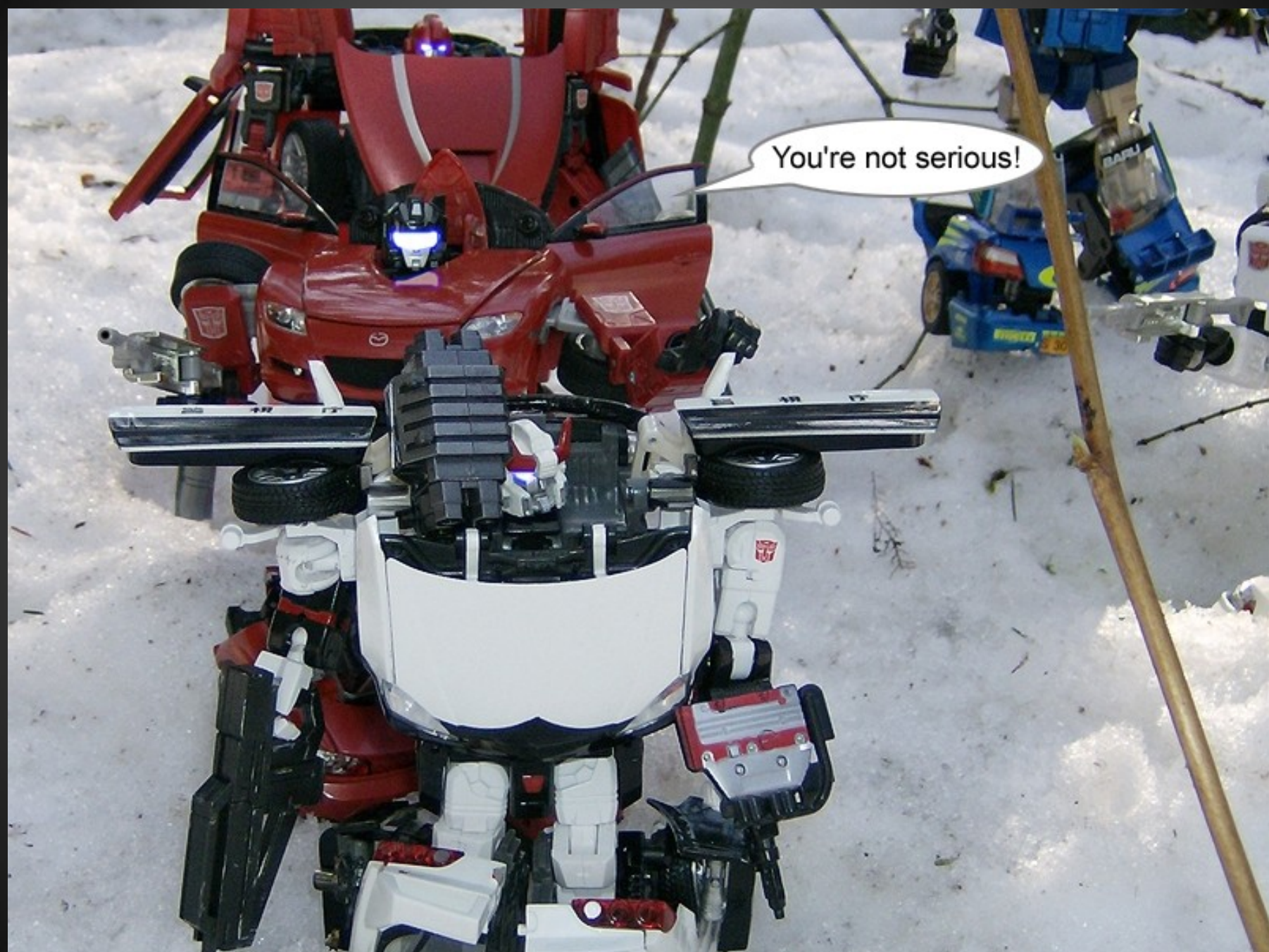
If it were a 'Con, we'd likely
know too. Hot laser through armour
and such.

Point.





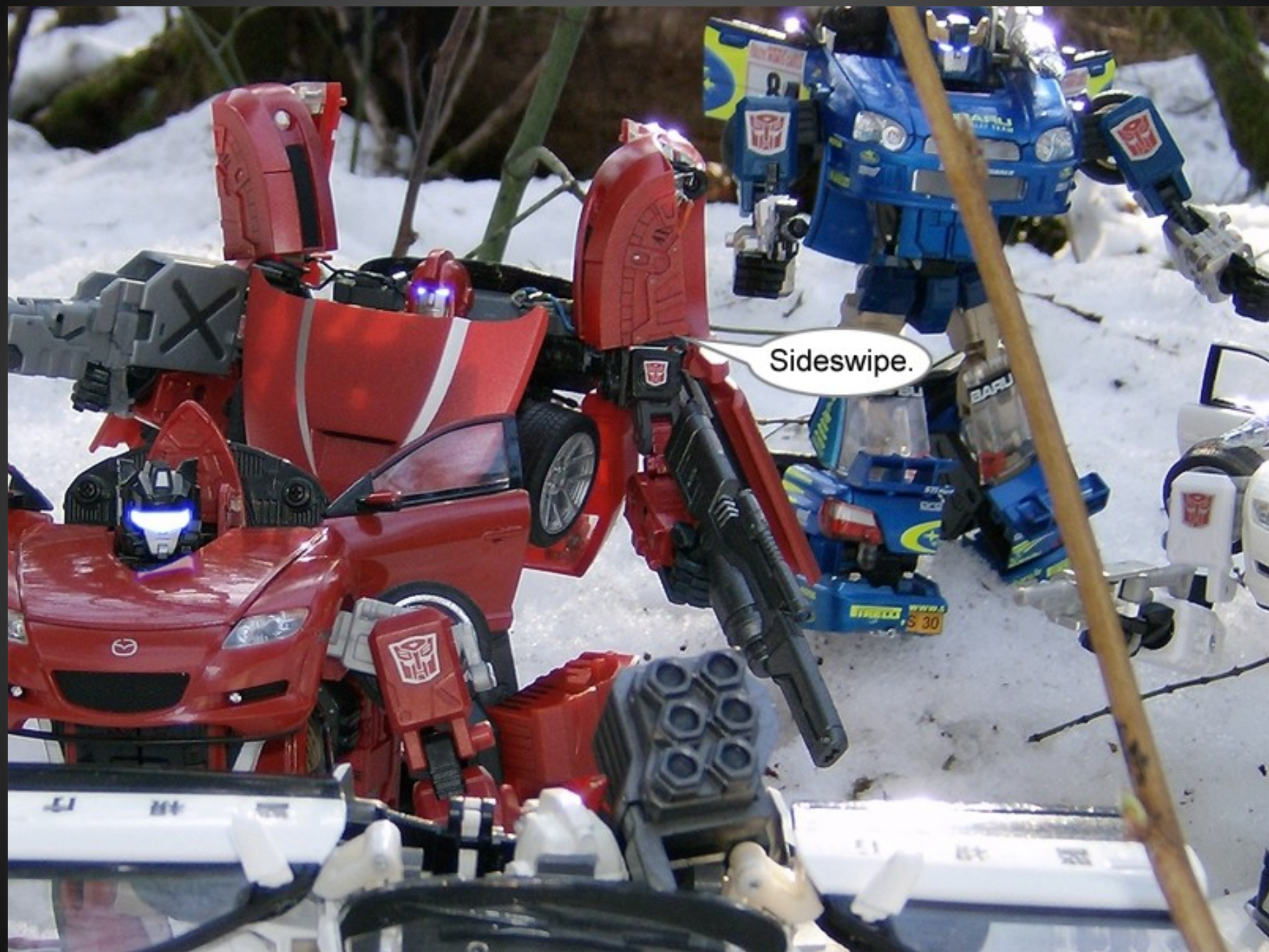
Chevron formation. Ironhide, take the point. Sideswipe, you're the bot back. Watch our skid-plates.



You're not serious!

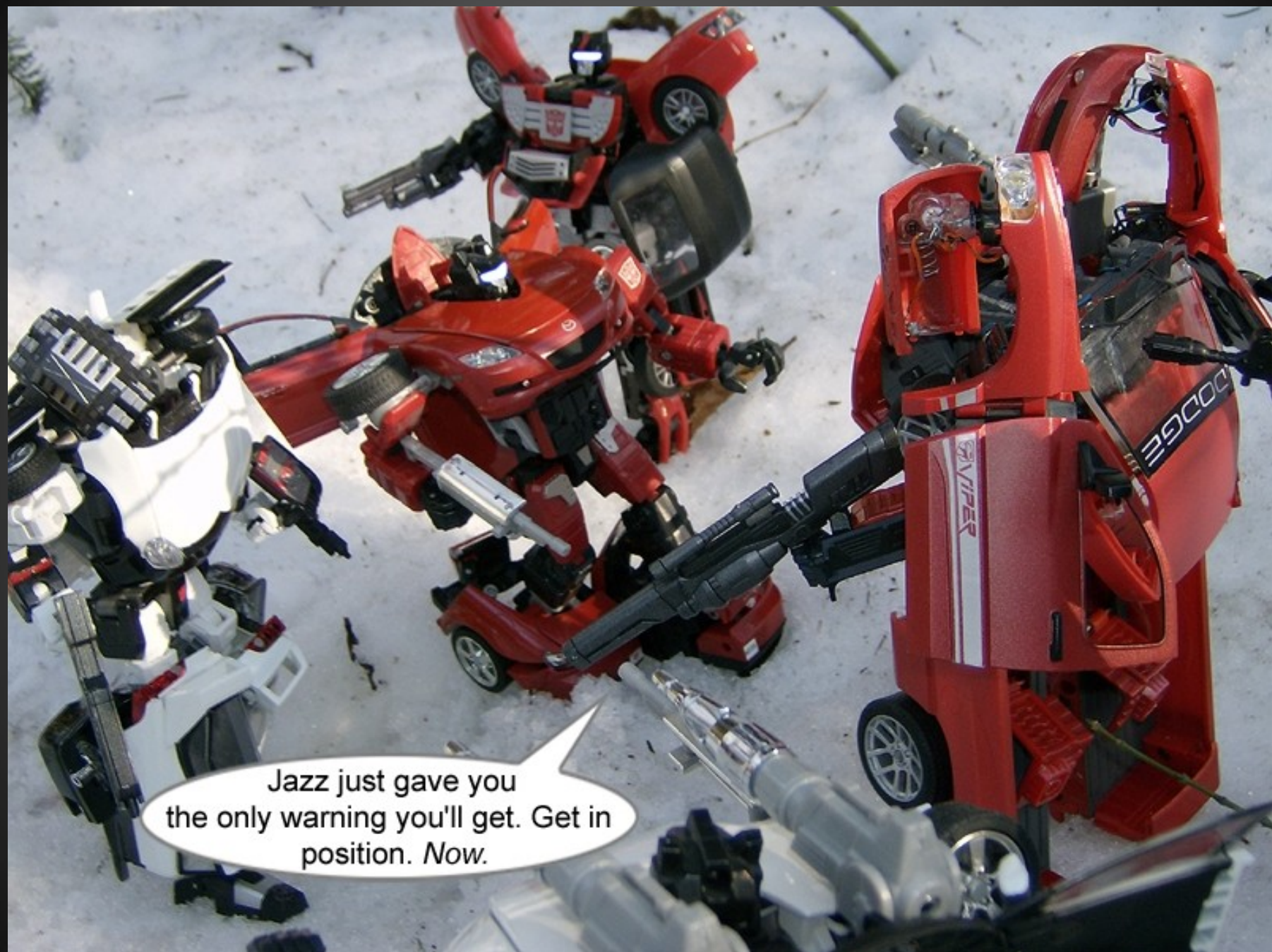






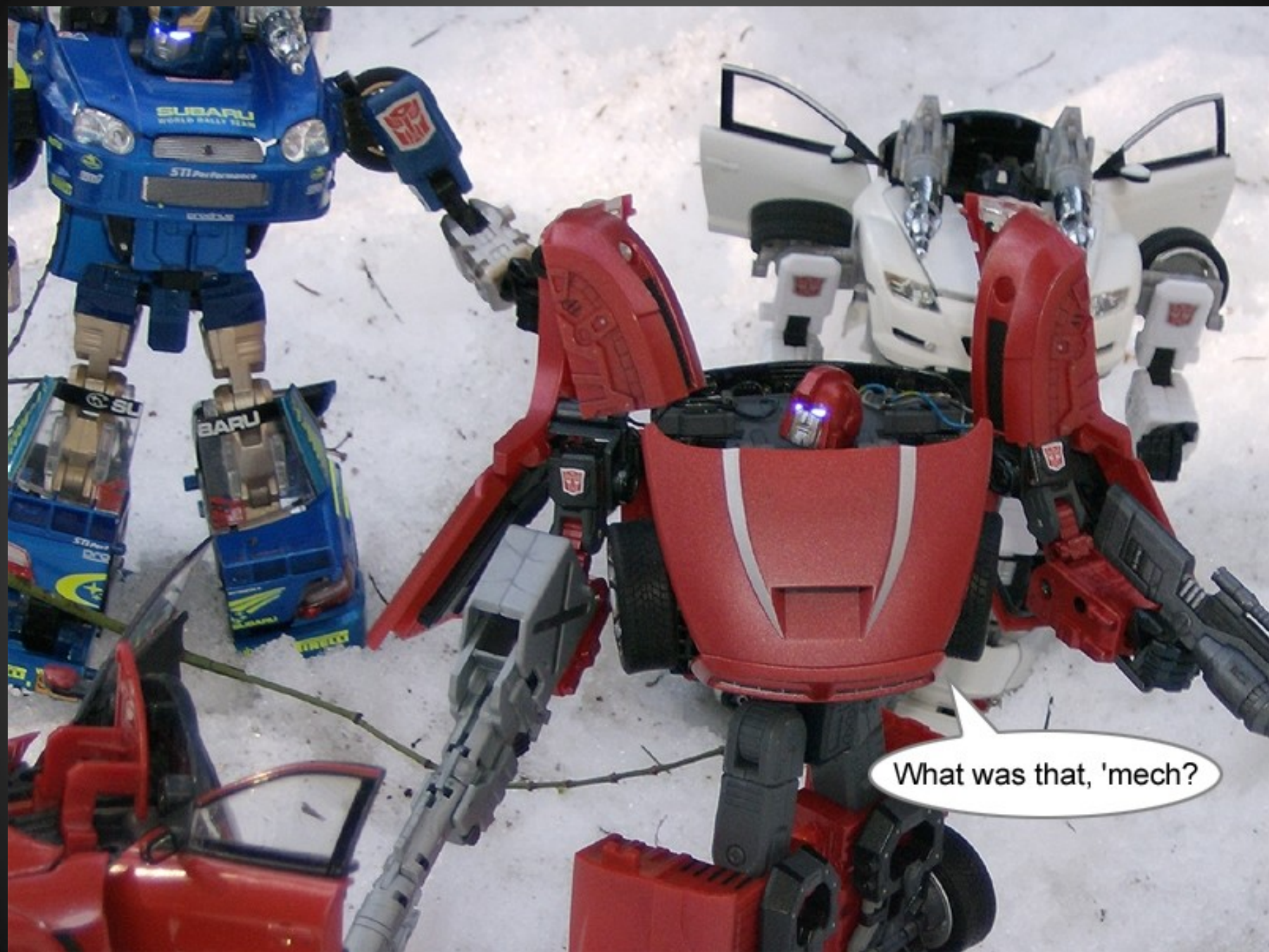
Sideswipe.







Fine.







Complying.



Stay on active sensors, Overdrive. The rest of you, passive sensors only until we're within 100 meters of the ridge.





Any change?

Signal is still muddled.
It reads mostly like Grimlock and our
psychopathic ray of sunshine, but
there's a weird pattern overlay.

Interference?





Overdrive, can you time shift?

A photograph of a LEGO Transformers scene set in a snowy, outdoor environment. In the foreground, a red and black Transformer (Hot Rod) is on the left, and another red Transformer (Hot Rod) is on the right. In the background, a white and black Transformer (Ratchet) is visible. The ground is covered in snow with some dry leaves and twigs scattered around. Two speech bubbles are overlaid on the image, containing dialogue between the characters.

No. Ratchet
didn't have time to
repair my temporal unit,
and told me I'd just
have to deal
with it.

Sounds familiar.
Why didn't you get Hot-
Rod to fix it?

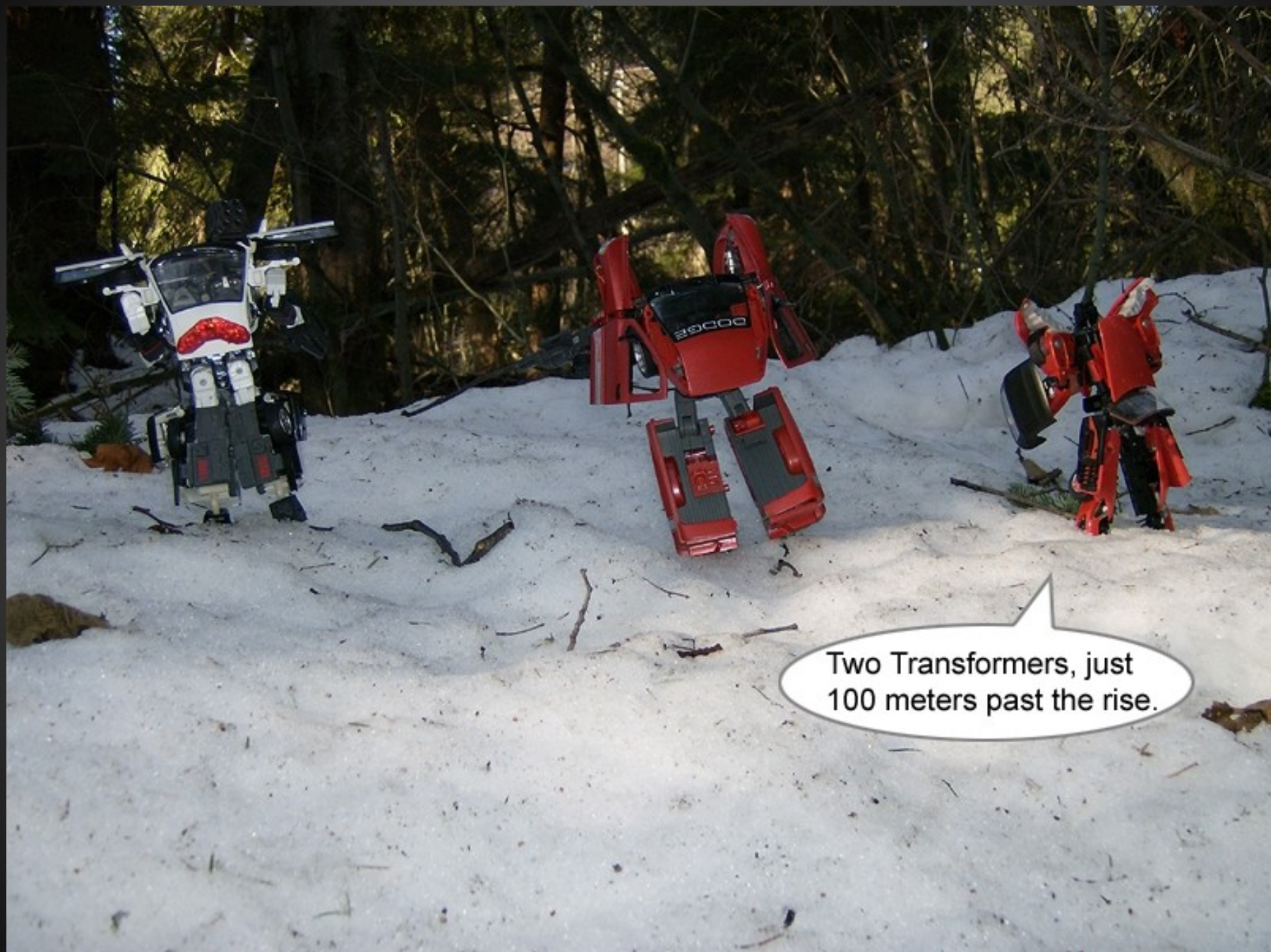
You're kidding, right?
Slaggin' dross, you wouldn't let him
fix your *legs*.





Ironhide, you and Overdrive
are going over with me. The rest
of you put it in neutral.






Two Transformers, just
100 meters past the rise.





A photograph of two Transformers action figures in a snowy, wooded environment. The figure in the foreground is red and black, with a complex, multi-jointed design. The figure in the background is white and black, also with a complex design. A speech bubble is positioned above the white figure. The ground is covered in snow, and there are bare tree branches and evergreen foliage in the background.

Overdrive...

A photograph of a snowy forest floor. The ground is covered in a layer of white snow, with some small patches of green moss or lichen visible. Several bare, dark brown branches are scattered across the snow, some standing upright and others lying flat. In the upper right corner, there are some evergreen trees, possibly spruce or fir, with their dark green needles partially visible. The lighting is soft, suggesting an overcast day.

...where are they?

We should be looking at them!

We're going down.
You three move up here and
put it in park.







My diodes are
surgin', Prowl.

Jamming detected!




A photograph of two Transformers toys in a snowy forest. On the left is a red Transformer, resembling Optimus Prime, standing in the snow. On the right is a white Transformer, resembling Megatron, also standing in the snow. The background consists of bare trees and a snowy ground. Three speech bubbles are overlaid on the image, containing the text: "I'm readin' it, too.", "Location!", and "Omni-directional.".

I'm readin' it, too.

Location!

Omni-directional.

A white and black Ironhide robot stands in a snowy forest. The robot is holding a small red and white object in its right hand. In the background, a blue robot is visible on a snow-covered hill. The scene is set in a winter forest with snow-covered ground and bare tree branches.

Ironhide, go full
ECCM. Overdrive, where
are those life-signs?



AAHH!

Prowl!








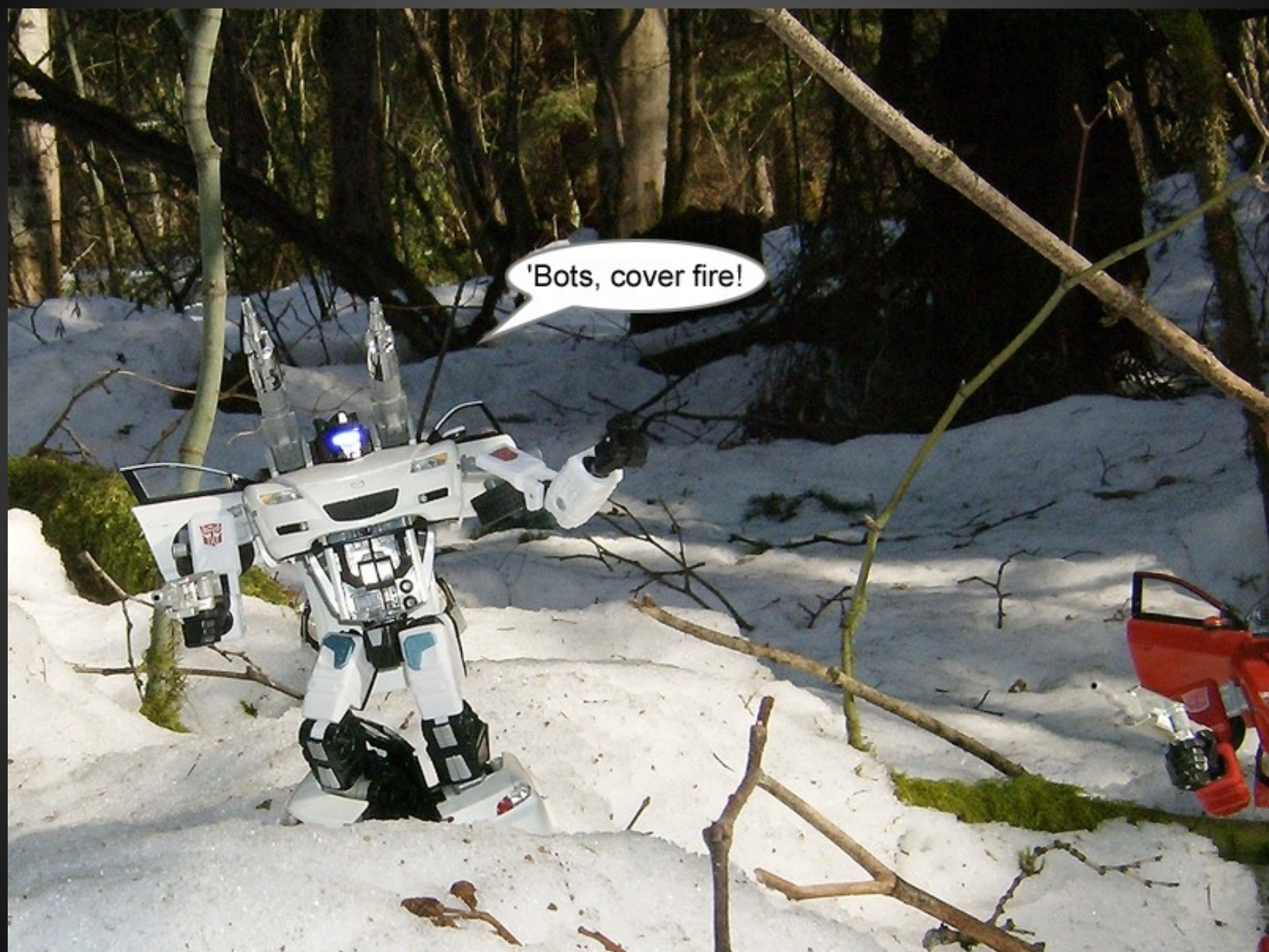
Prowl!


It's a trap!

A scene from a Transformers movie showing two characters in a snowy, wooded environment. One character, a blue and silver robot, is in the foreground, looking towards the other character. The second character, a black and red robot, is partially buried in the snow in the background. A speech bubble is attached to the blue robot.

Life-signs source: here.
Your life-signs: about to be
terminated.







A disruptor missile
should do the trick...

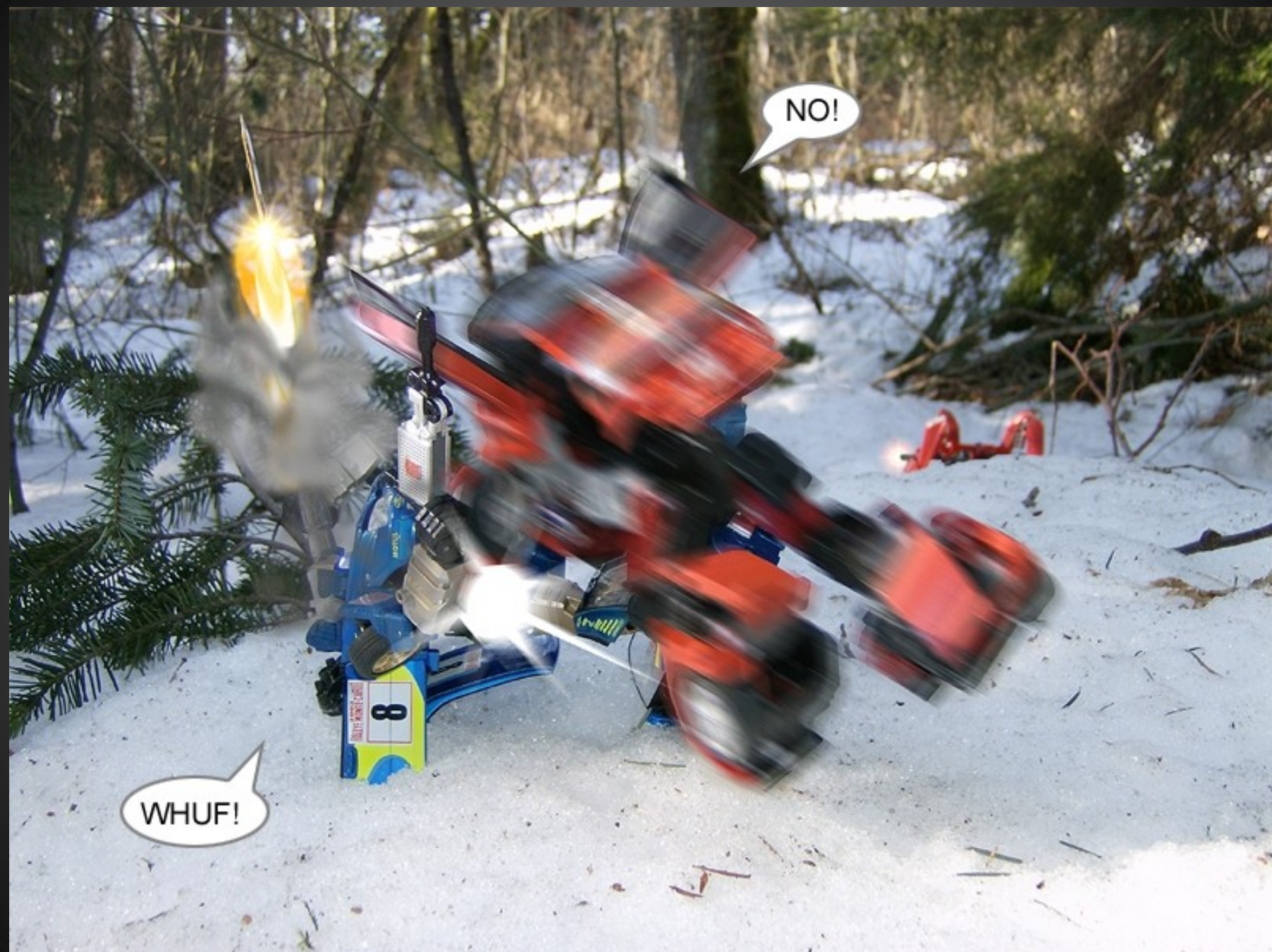
DUMBFIRE MODE ENGAGED
PROXIMITY FUSE ACTIVE
BLAST RADIUS: 85M



הדור ה-2
המבצע
המבצע

הדור ה-2





NO!

WHUF!



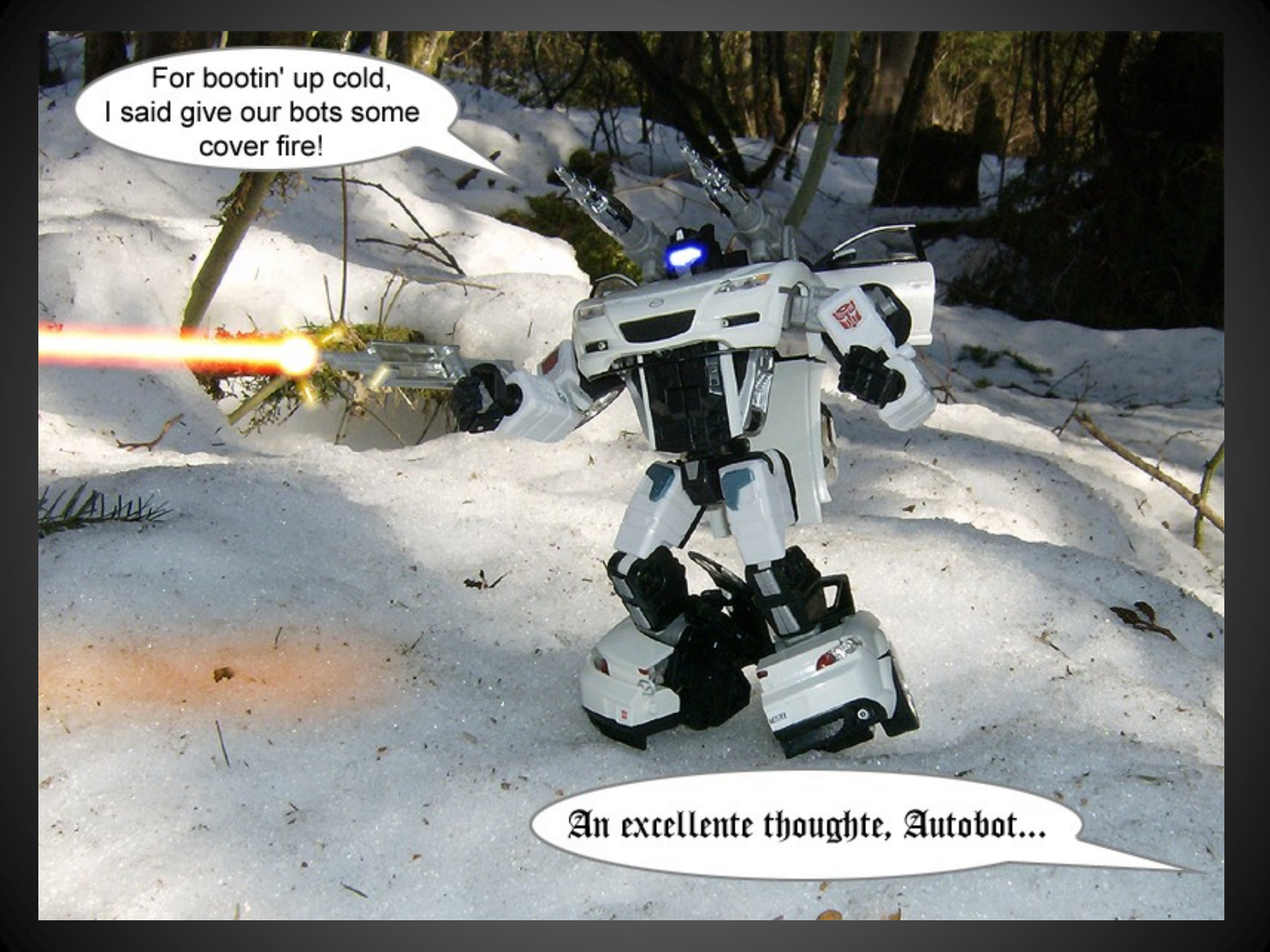
A scene from a Transformers video featuring two characters in a snowy forest. On the left, a blue Transformer (Blaze the Red Star) stands upright, holding a silver sword. On the right, a red Transformer (Blade) is partially visible, also holding a sword. The background is a snowy landscape with evergreen trees. Two speech bubbles are present: one from the blue Transformer asking 'ARE YOU GLITCHED?!' and another from the red Transformer responding 'That's my brother and Grimlock down there!'.

ARE YOU GLITCHED?!

That's my brother and
Grimlock down there!

That's why Overdrive
couldn't resolve the signal properly. He
was picking up Autobot bodies with
Decepticon sparks!



A white and black Transformers Autobot figure, resembling Optimus Prime, stands in a snowy forest. The figure is holding a glowing orange and yellow energy sword in its right arm. A bright blue light emanates from its chest. The background shows snow-covered ground and trees.

For bootin' up cold,
I said give our bots some
cover fire!

An eccellente thoughte, Autobot...

...but who is covering thine bak and syde?



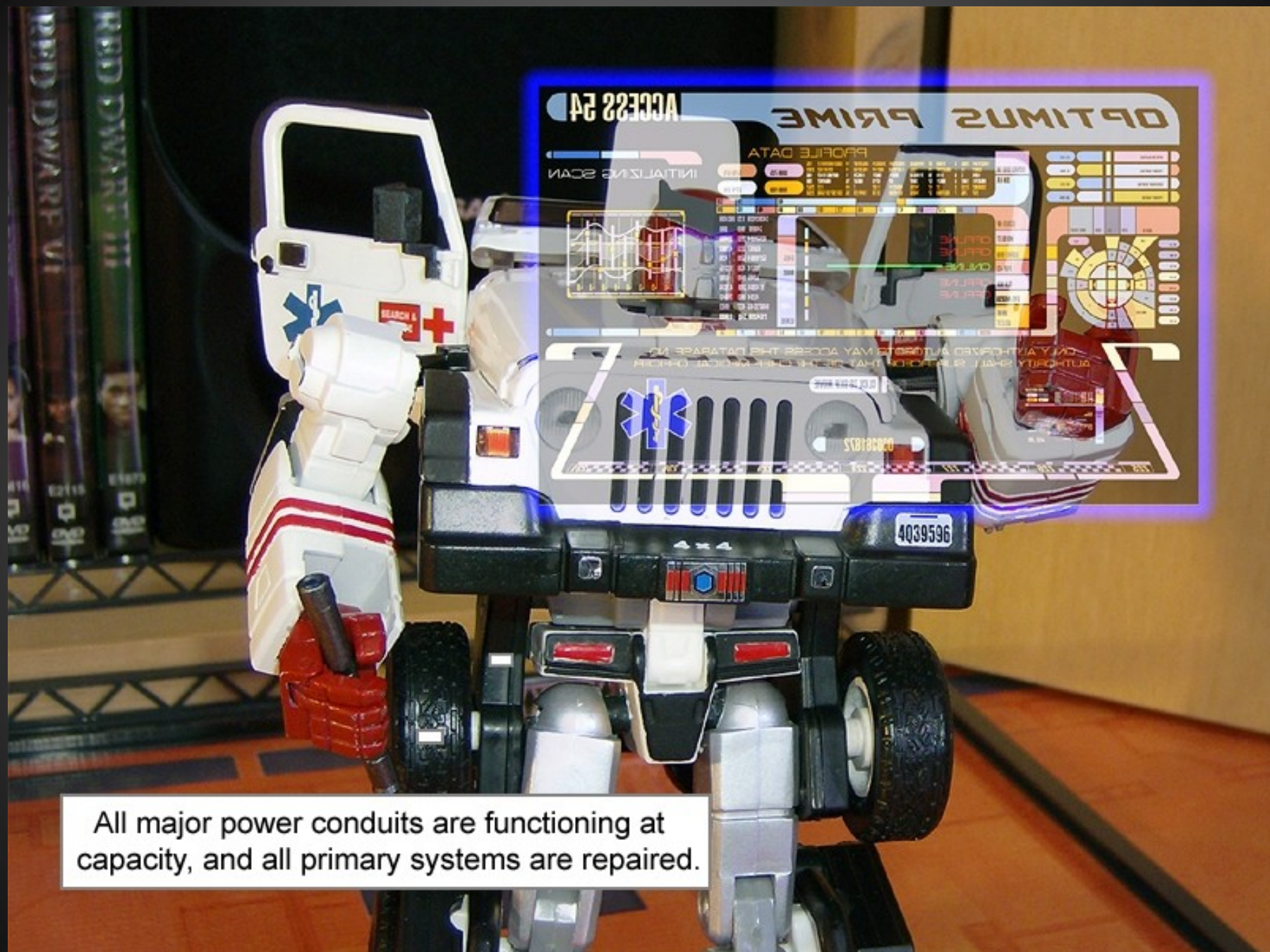
Interlude

I don't understand this!



Your laser core is uncompromised.
Your spark appears fully intact.
Diagnostics confirm that your
cosmotron is on-line again.







Slag, I've even replenished what little Cybertronium you've used up.



So why in Primus' name won't you reactivate? You're in no condition to fight, but you should be conscious.





The humans have an expression: it's not the tools, it's the craftsman. Well, there's a certain logic to that...to a point.

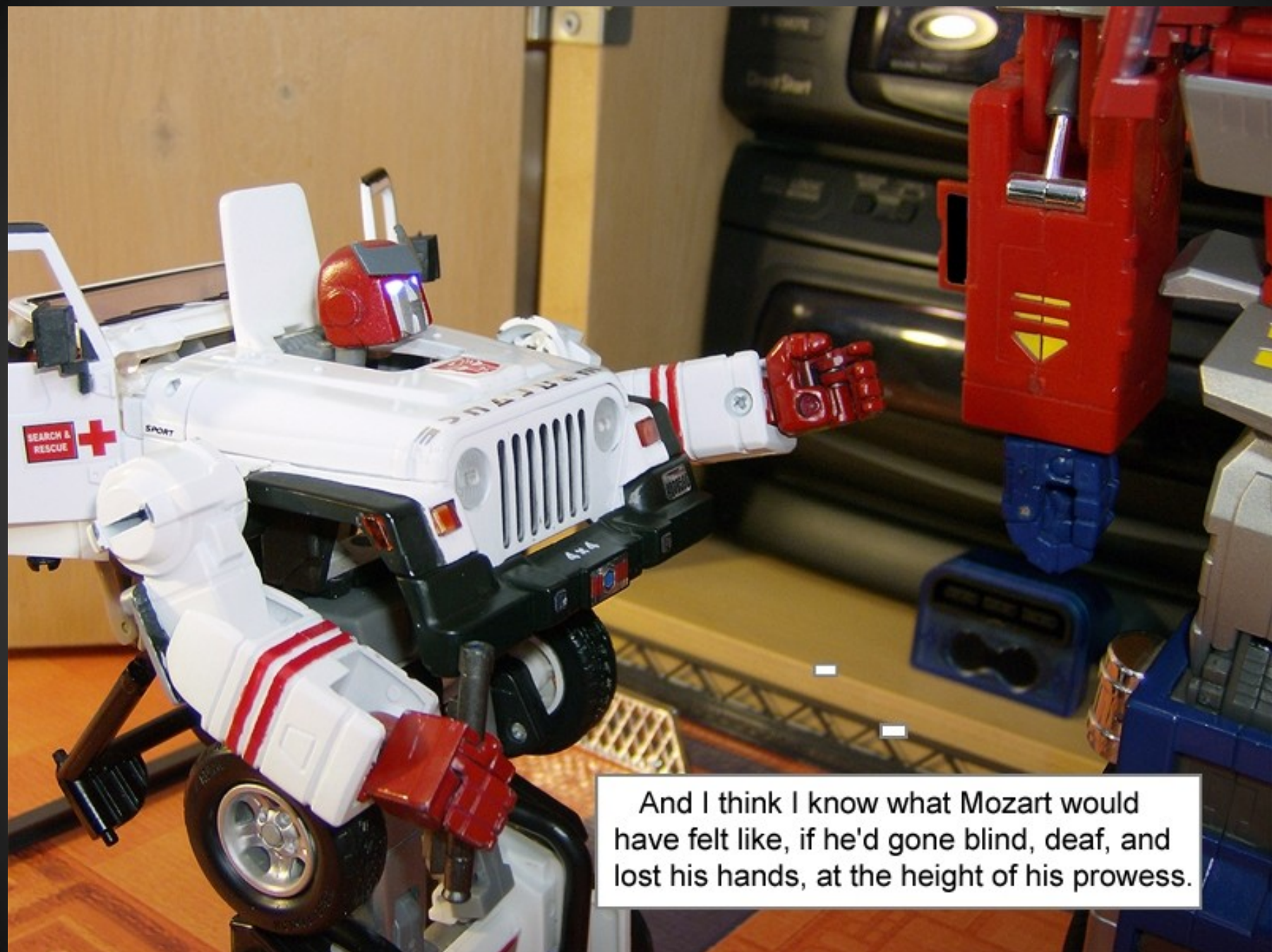


But take away the piano, and what would Mozart have been? That tool allowed him is voice, enabled him to express his genius. I've used every tool I have to get you operational, Prime. Yet you stand here, inert.



Have all the deaths finally gotten to you? Have you lost the will to live?






And I think I know what Mozart would have felt like, if he'd gone blind, deaf, and lost his hands, at the height of his prowess.

Eh? What was that noise?

Hot Rod?



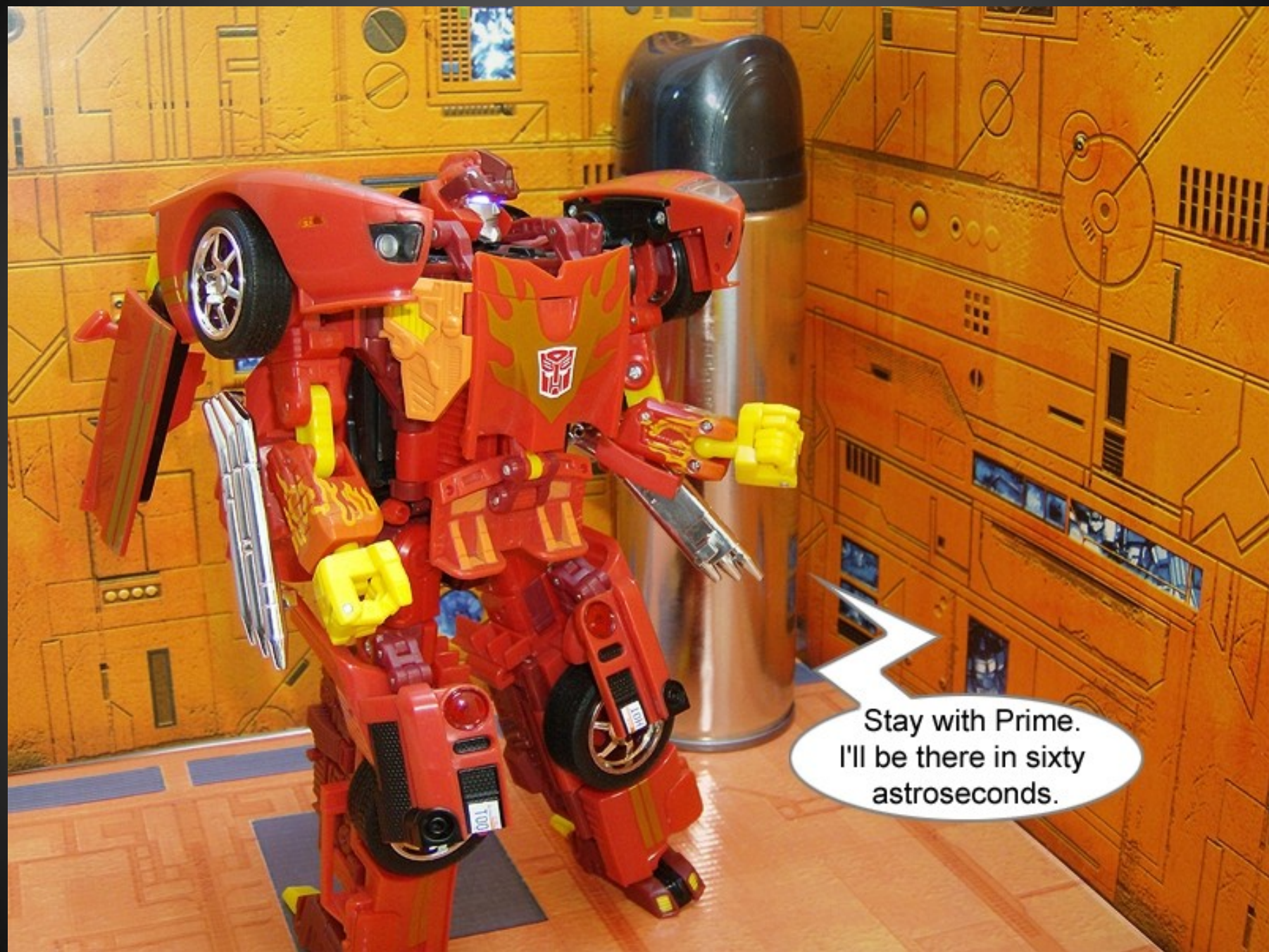





Hot Rod, where
are you and Skids?

Skids is on the bridge. I'm on deck 10, junction H-78. Why?

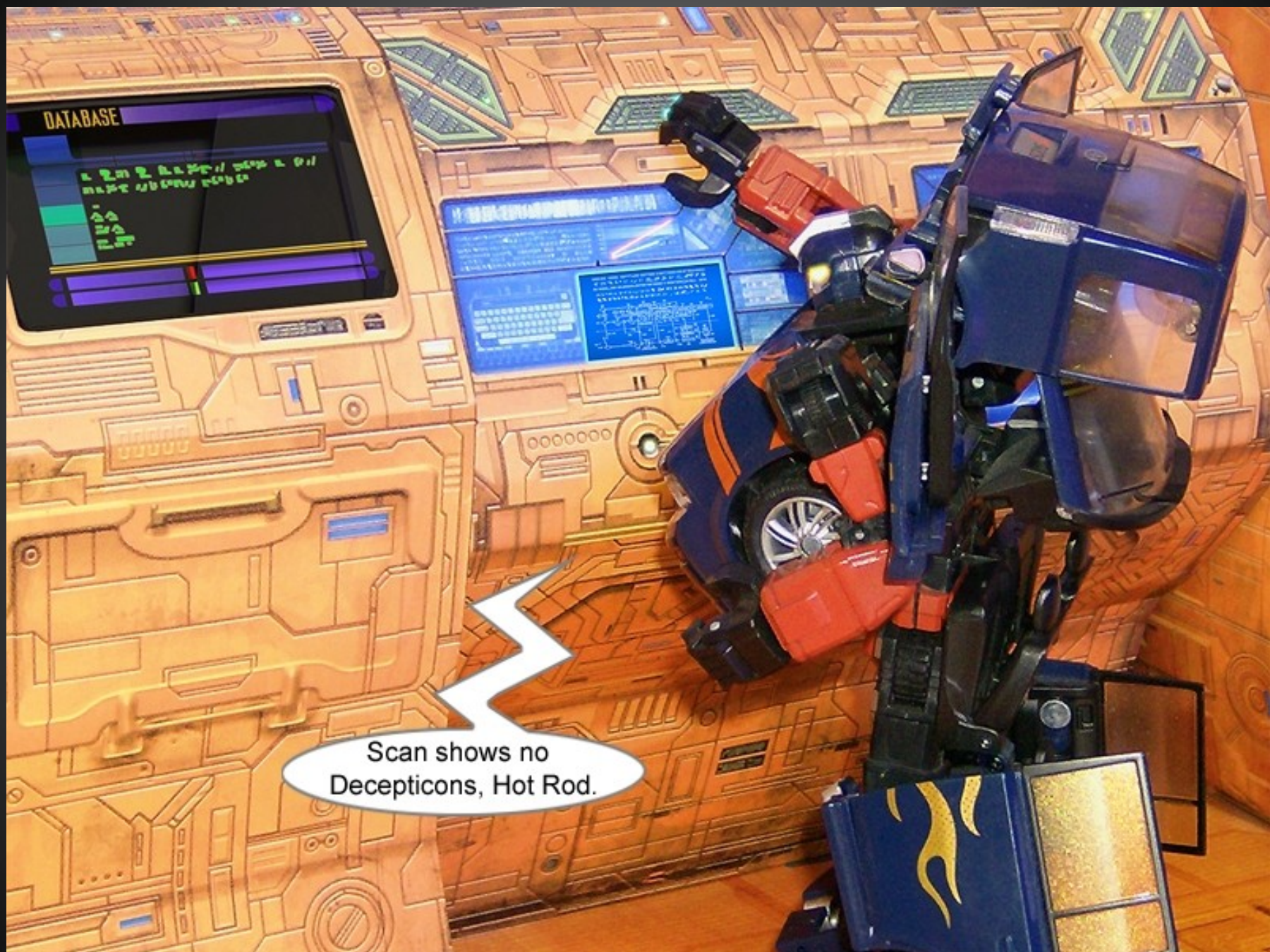




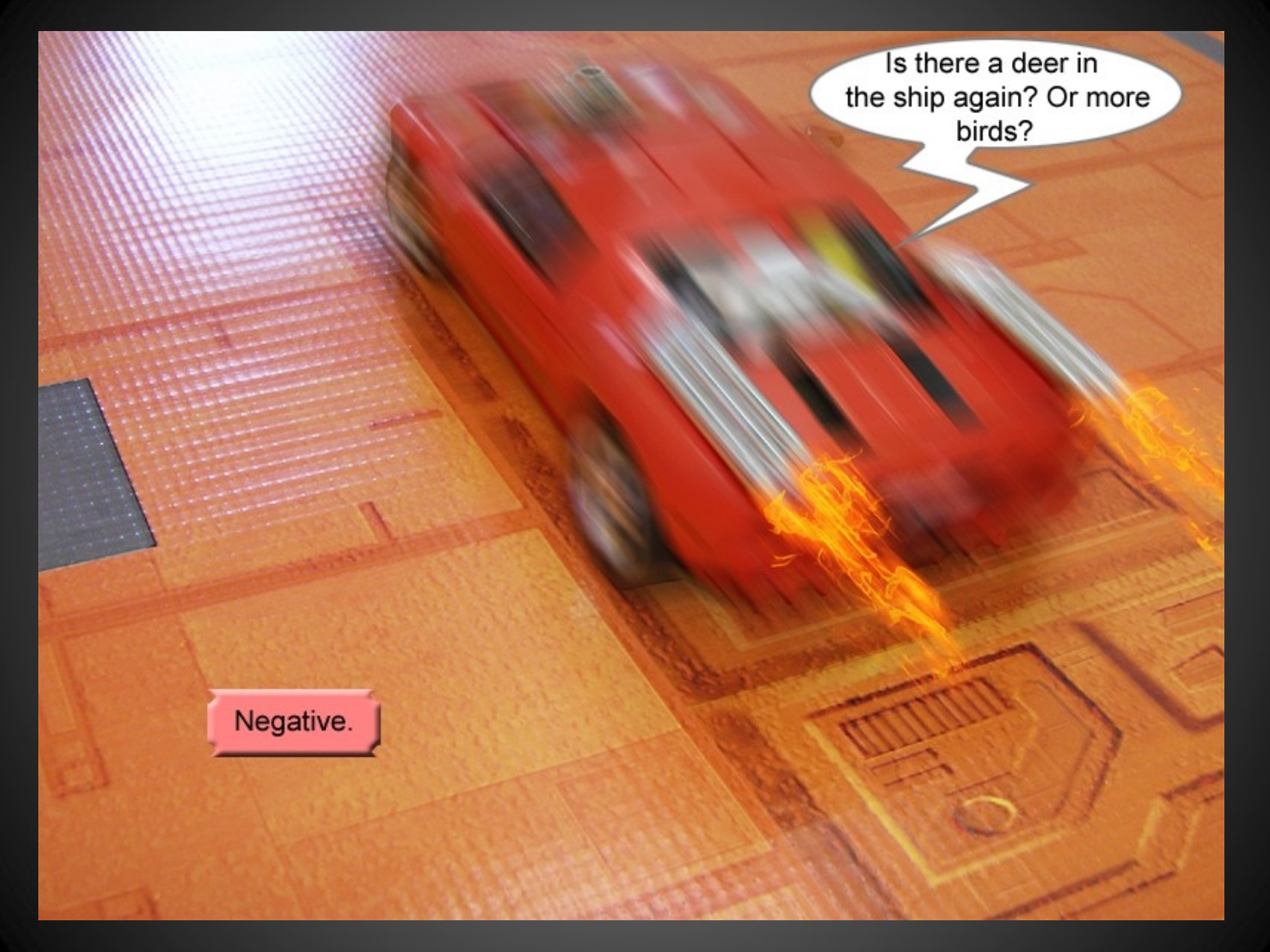




Skids, we may have
'Cons in the Ark. Run a
security scan.



Scan shows no
Decepticons, Hot Rod.

A red rocket ship is shown in motion, traveling diagonally across a green printed circuit board (PCB). The ship is leaving a trail of orange flames and smoke behind it. The PCB features various components, including a large black integrated circuit on the left and several smaller components and traces. A speech bubble from the ship asks, "Is there a deer in the ship again? Or more birds?".

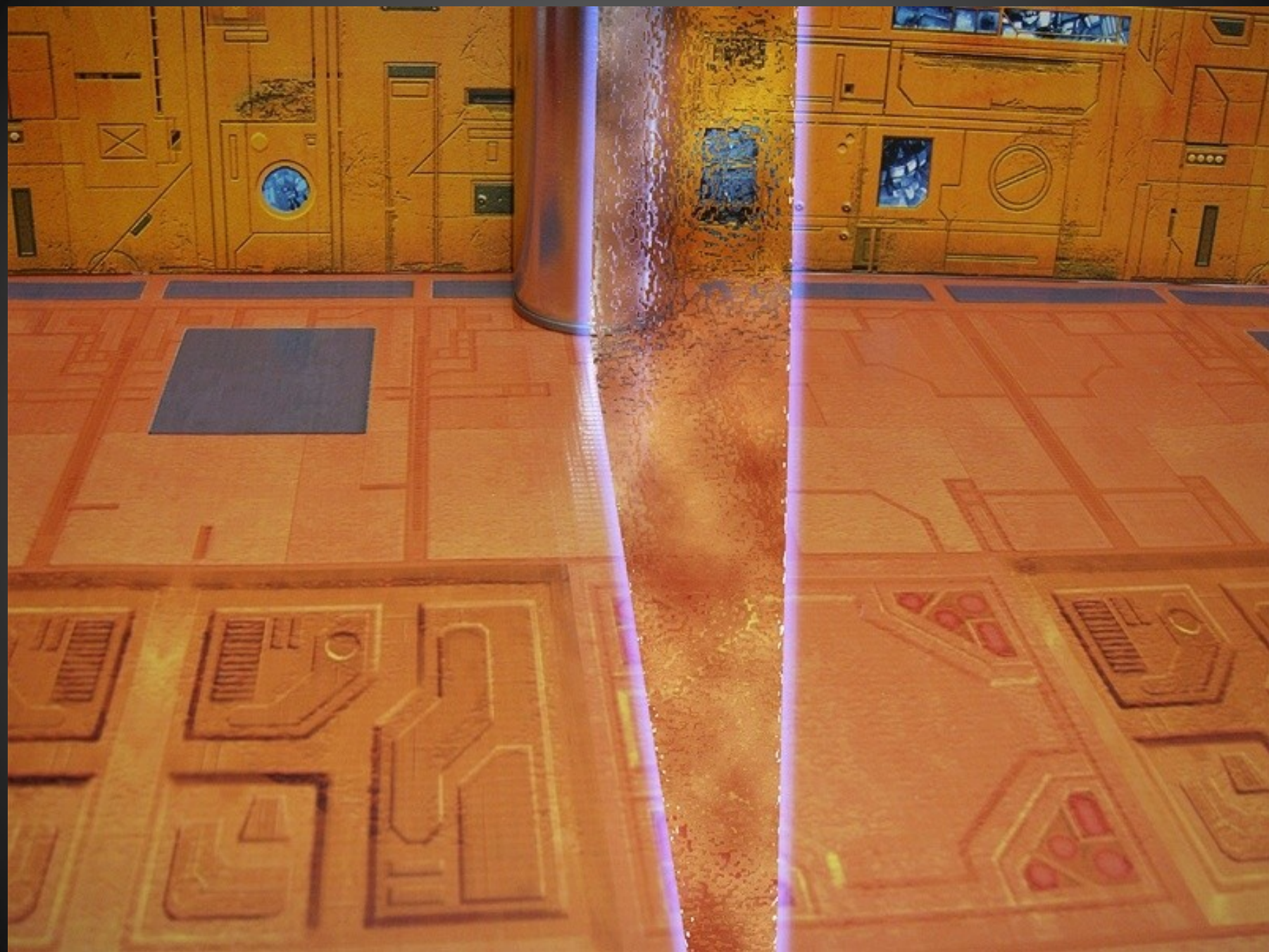
Is there a deer in the ship again? Or more birds?

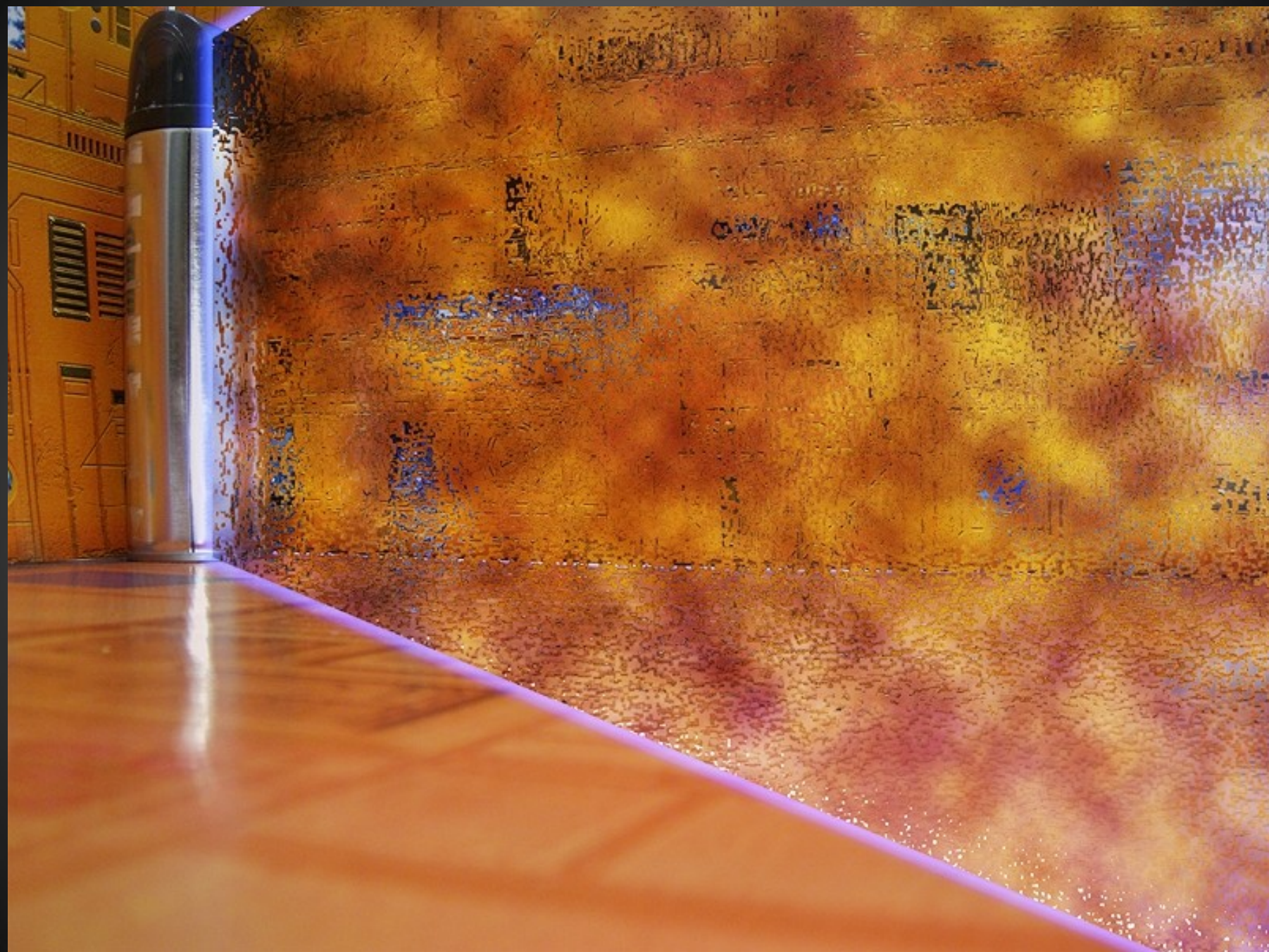
Negative.

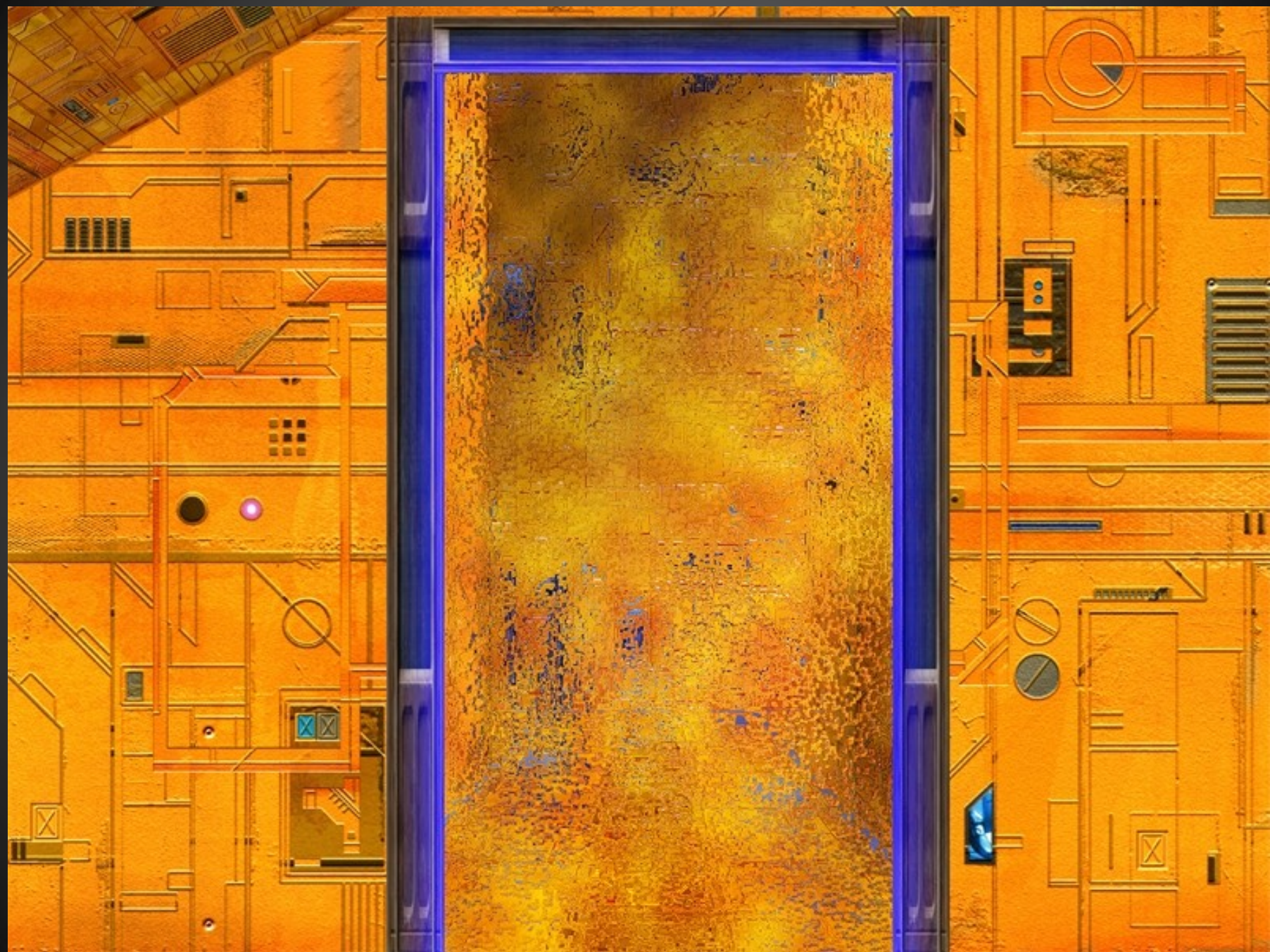
Skids, activate
security force-fields in a
three corridor radius around
the main repair bay, as well as
on all entry points into the
bay itself.

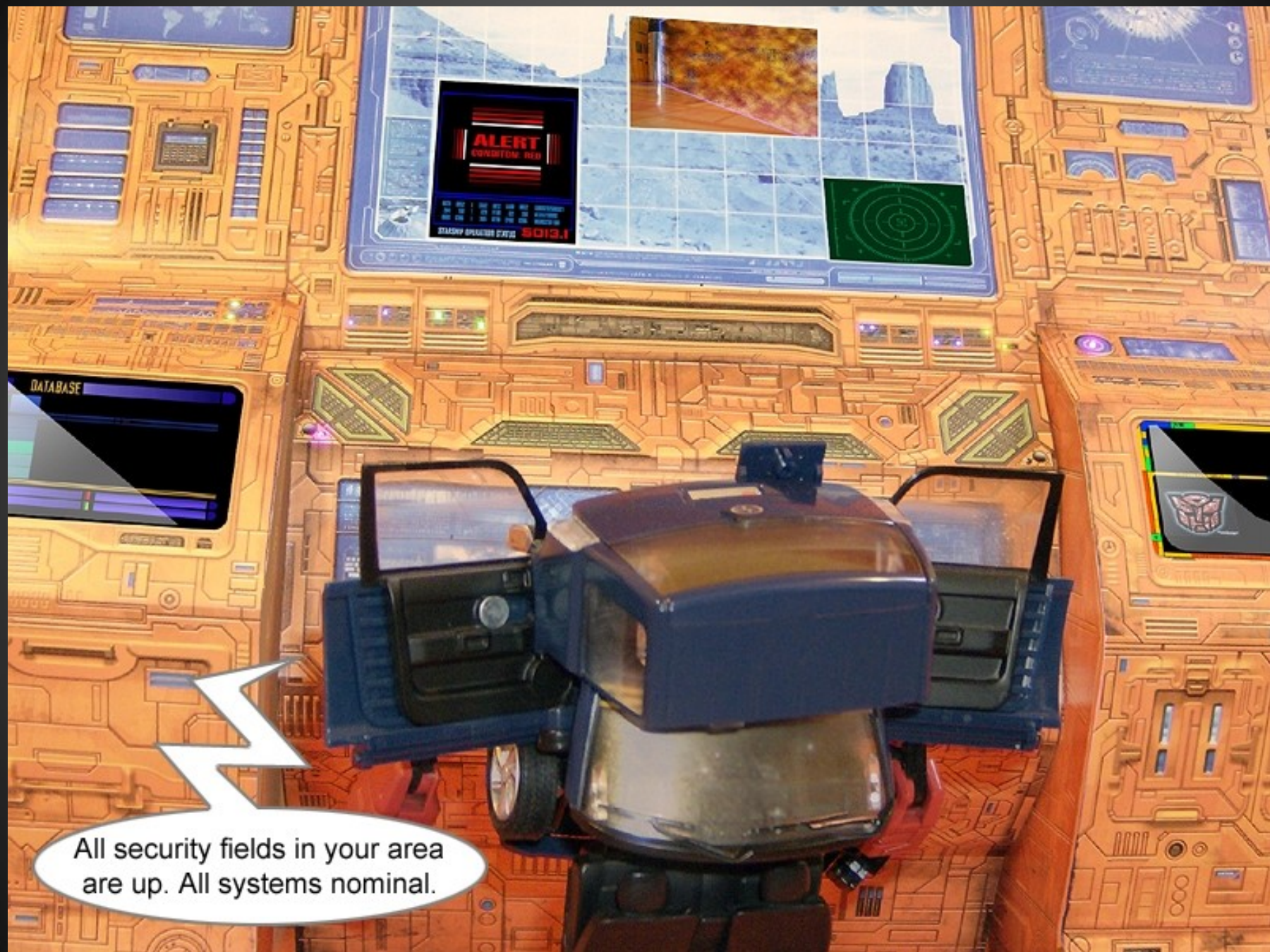












All security fields in your area
are up. All systems nominal.

Then whatever you are...



...you're trapped in here with me.



What in the name of Unicron...?



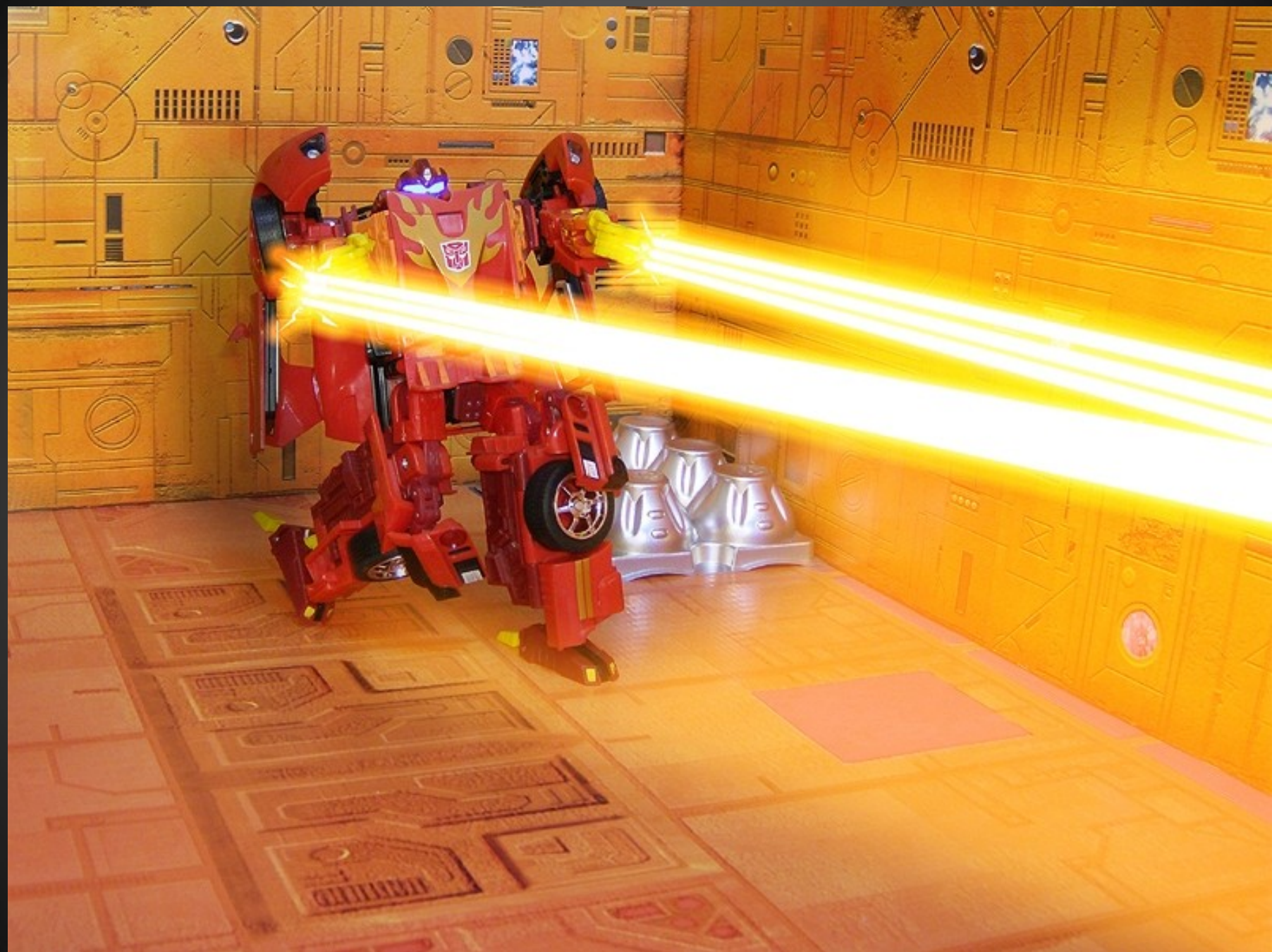


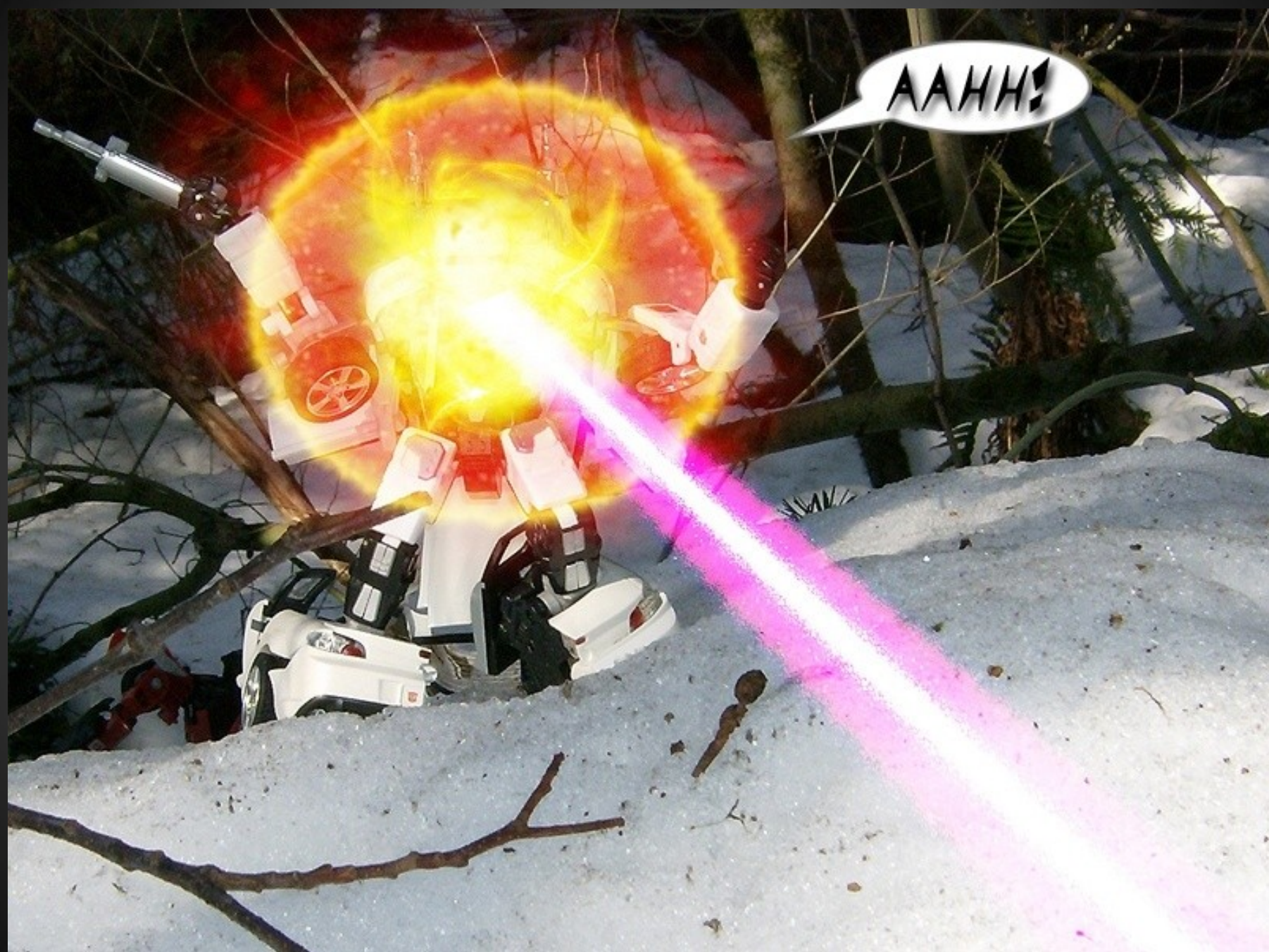
!!TARGETING ERROR!!
NO TARGET ACQUIRED

LIFESIGNS: NONE

MASS: NONE

FORCE-FIELD INTERFERING WITH ROENTGEN & RAD COUNTS



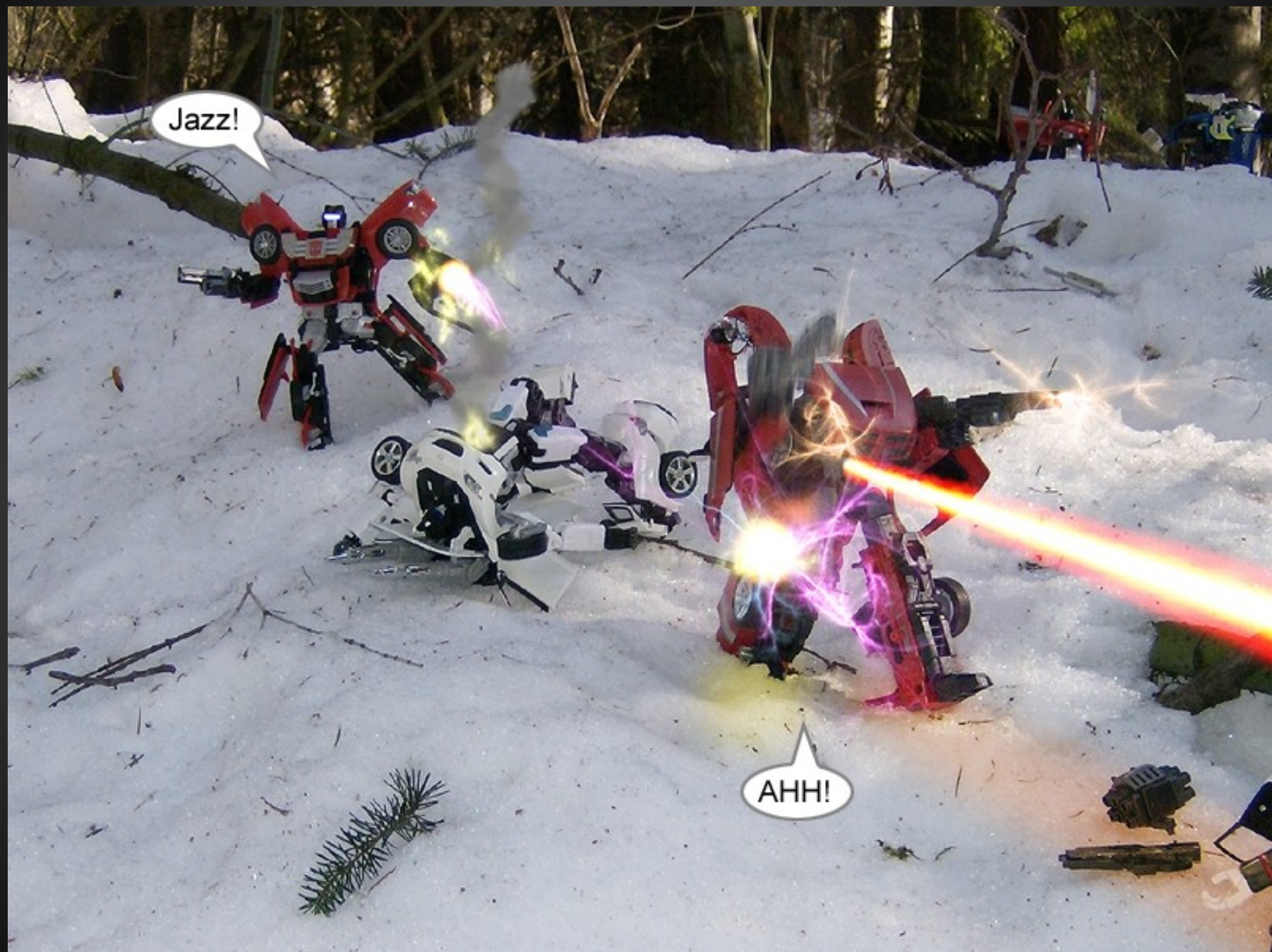


AAHH!

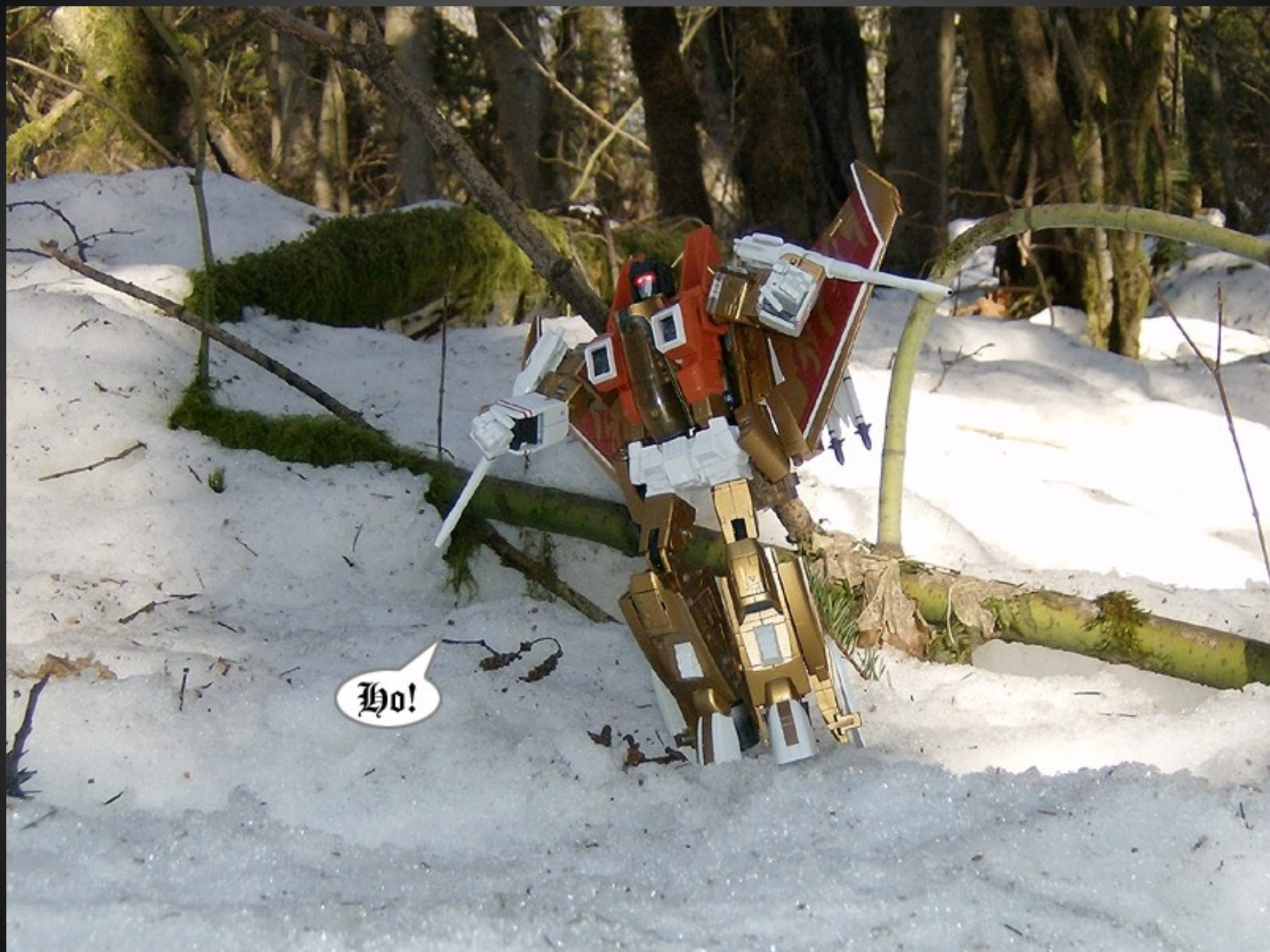



Jazz!

AHH!







A photograph of a snowy forest floor with several trees in the background. A figure, possibly a person or a creature, is blurred in motion, appearing to fall or move quickly through the air. Two bright, glowing red laser lines cross the scene horizontally and diagonally. A speech bubble is overlaid on the left side of the image.


An' his foes did
stremeth fyr in-to the skye, an'
al the worlde laughethed at
the lighte.



Slaggit, he's agile!



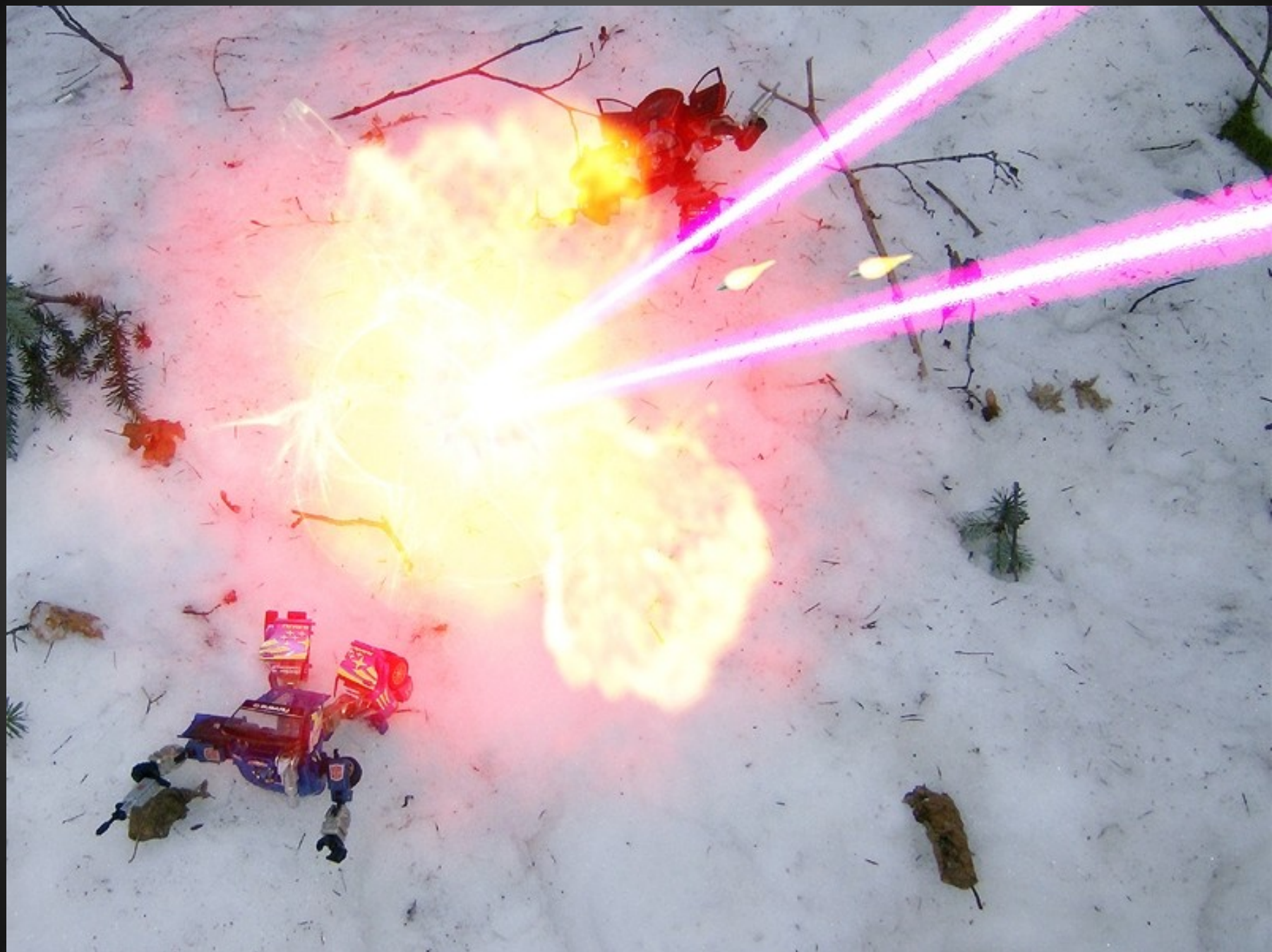
Yeah, what we really need is a weapon with a wide blast-radius that interrupts energon flow. Like a disruptor missile. Oh, wait a breem...



Ho! His foes are made
of stronge metale, I gesse; Yet their
fyr anoyeth this companye.



...oh slag...





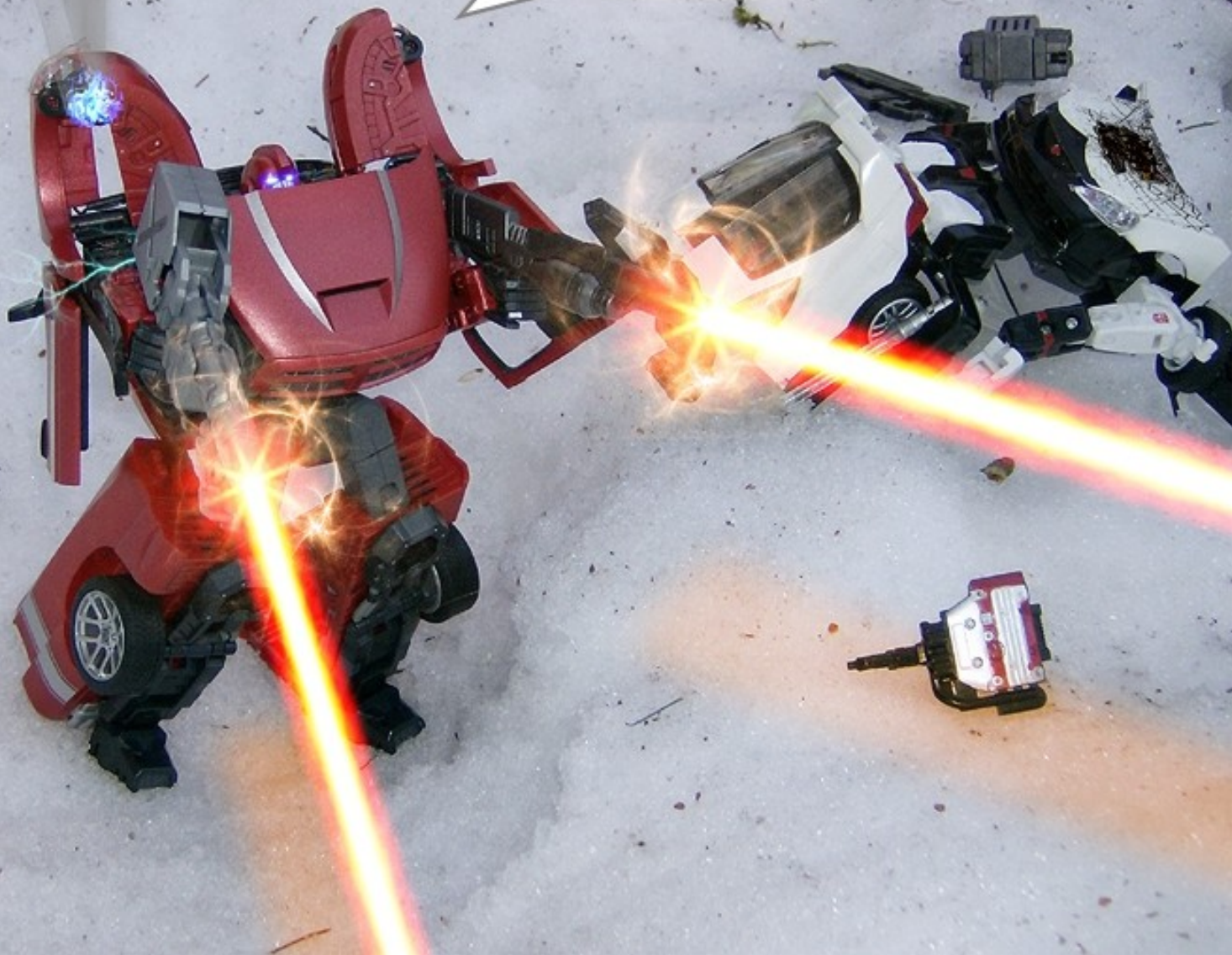
AH!

How's Jazz?

UGH! Serious, but not critical. Auto-repair systems are on-line; he should be mobile in a few breems.



Prowl's worse. We gotta
get 'em outta here.



Over there; at least
we'll have some cover on
our backs!





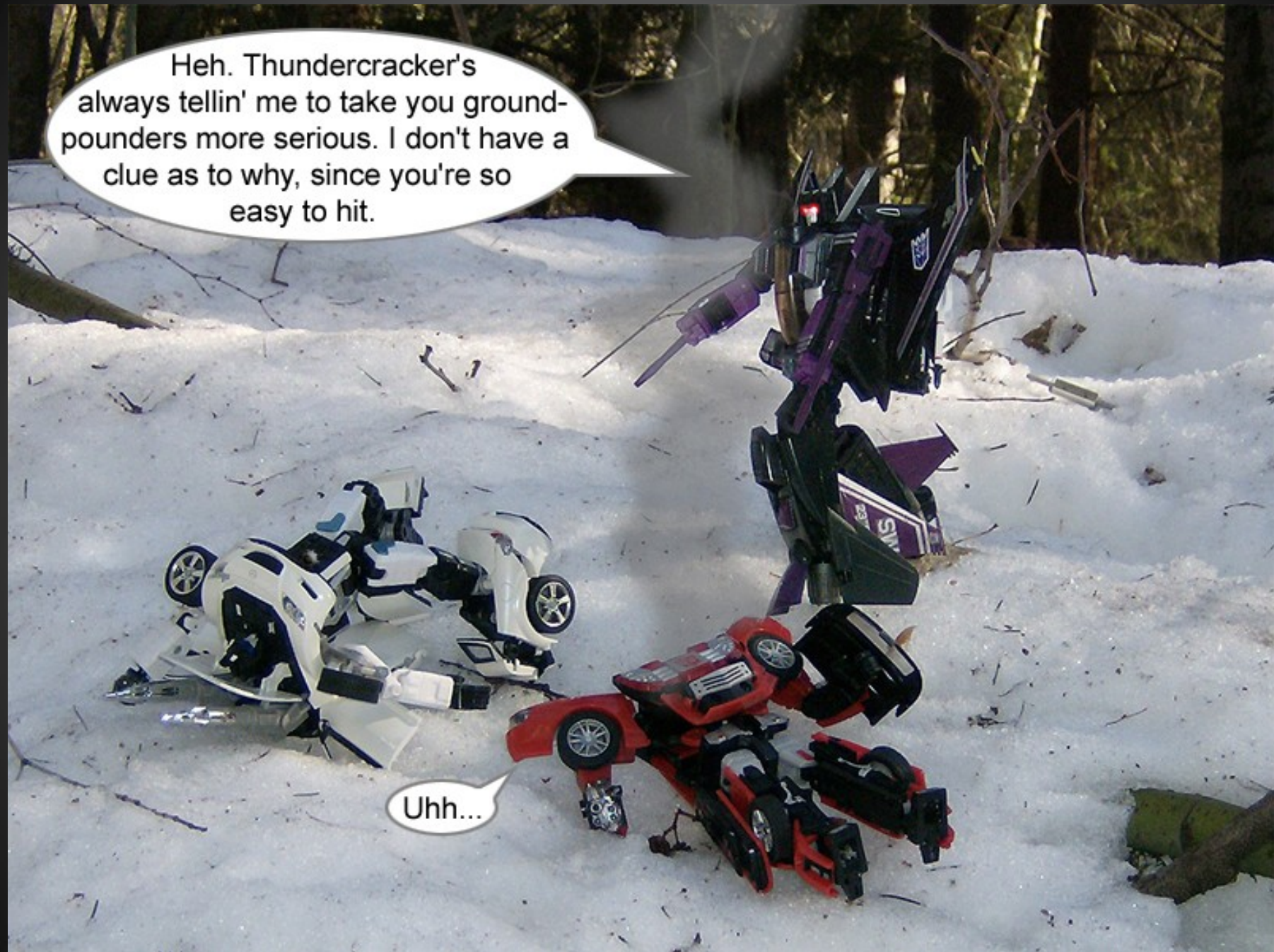
Not likely, Autobot.

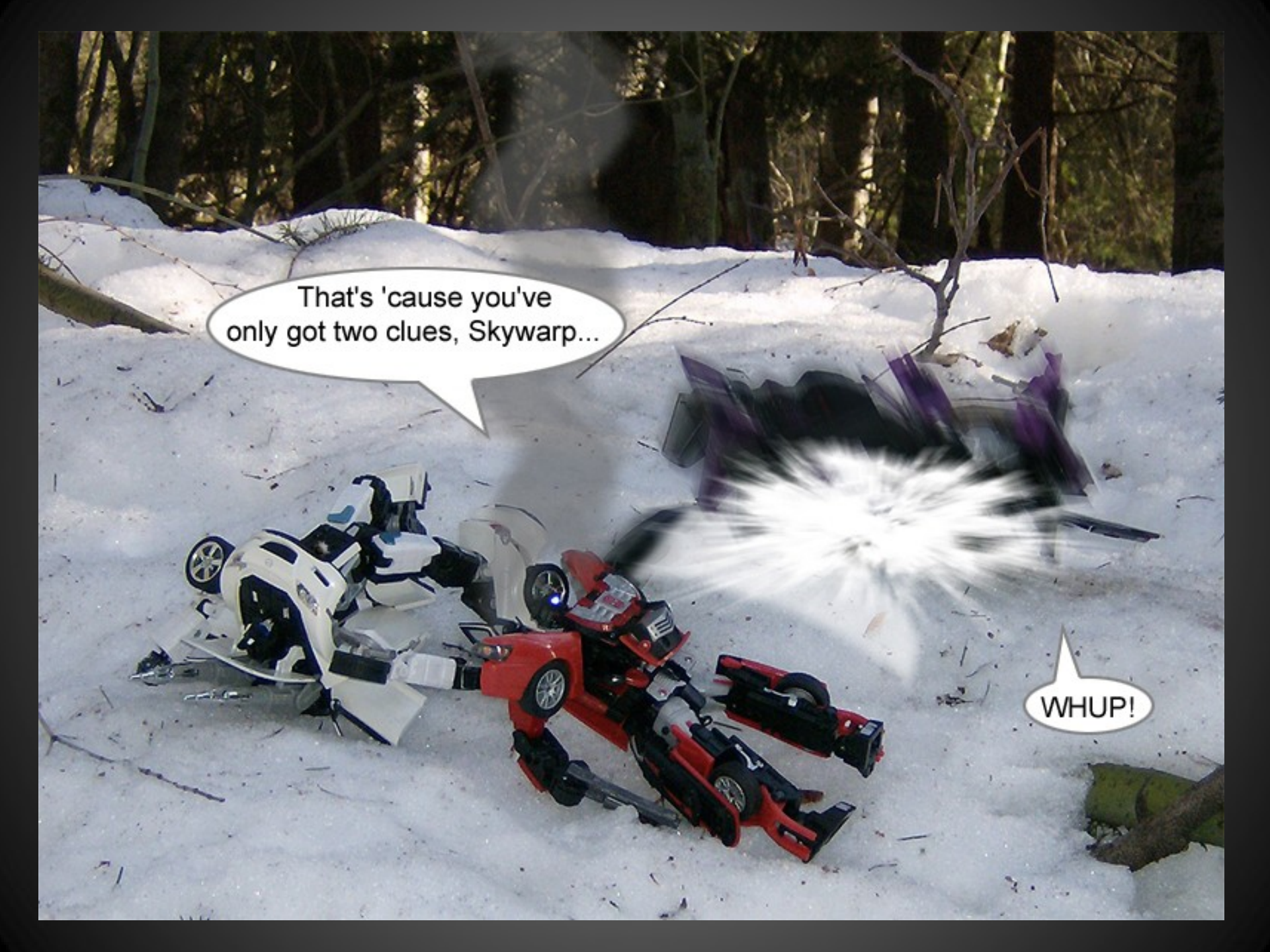
AARRG!



Heh. Thundercracker's
always tellin' me to take you ground-
pounders more serious. I don't have a
clue as to why, since you're so
easy to hit.


Uhh...





That's 'cause you've
only got two clues, Skywarp...

WHUP!



...one's lost, and the
other's out looking for it!

Ak! Slaggin' snow's got
my stabilizers wedged!

Huh?!









ARRGH!

Woah!



Way too predictable, Warpie.

This hiding is pointless,
Soundwave! Skywarp's been hit, and
there are two badly damaged 'Bots out
there! Let's grab 'em and go.



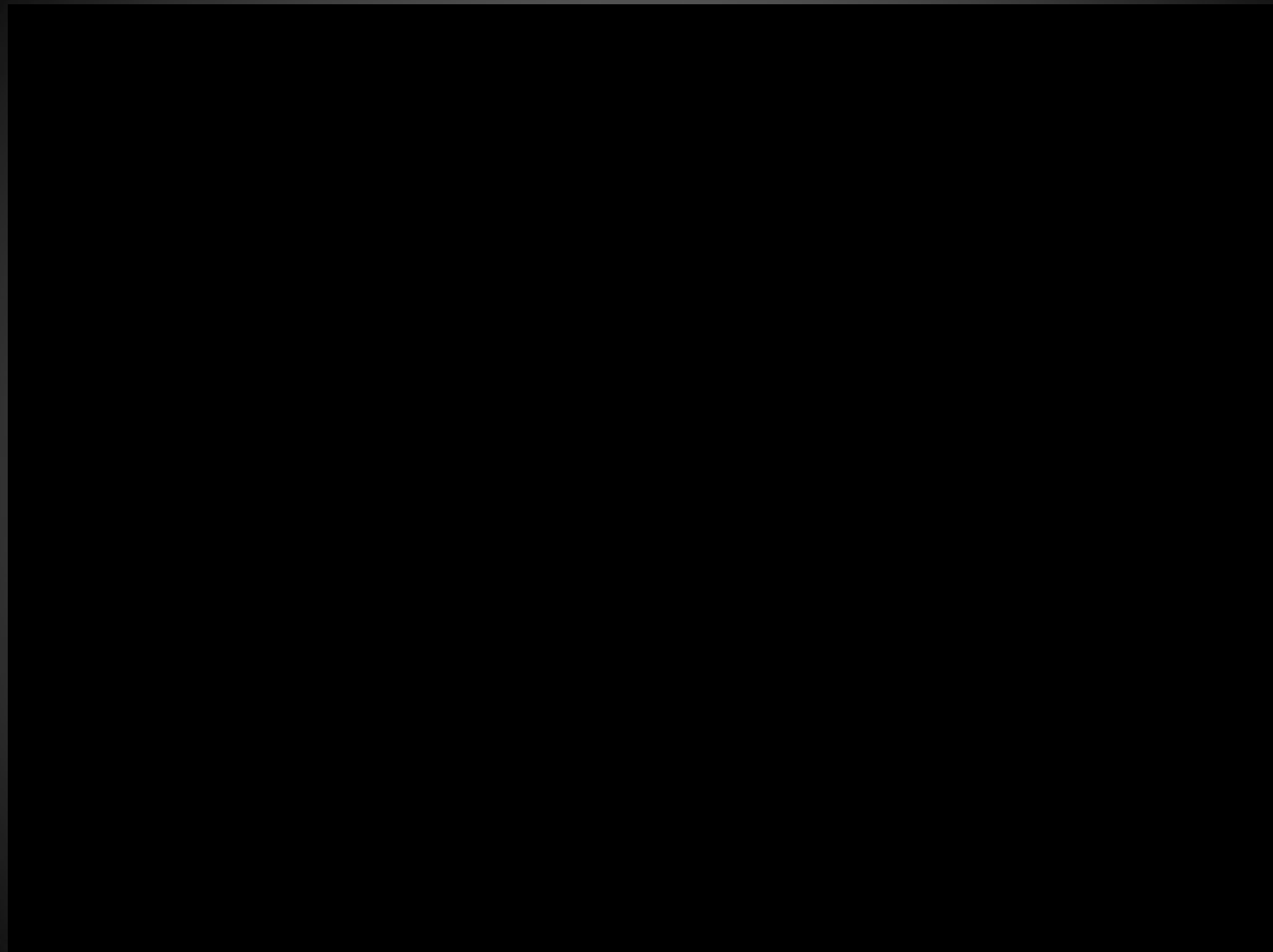
Possibility of damage: high.
Current position: safer.

Ah, we're all gonna terminate eventually! I say we charge 'em!

Tactic: inadvisable. Thrill of battle: undeniable. Course of action...

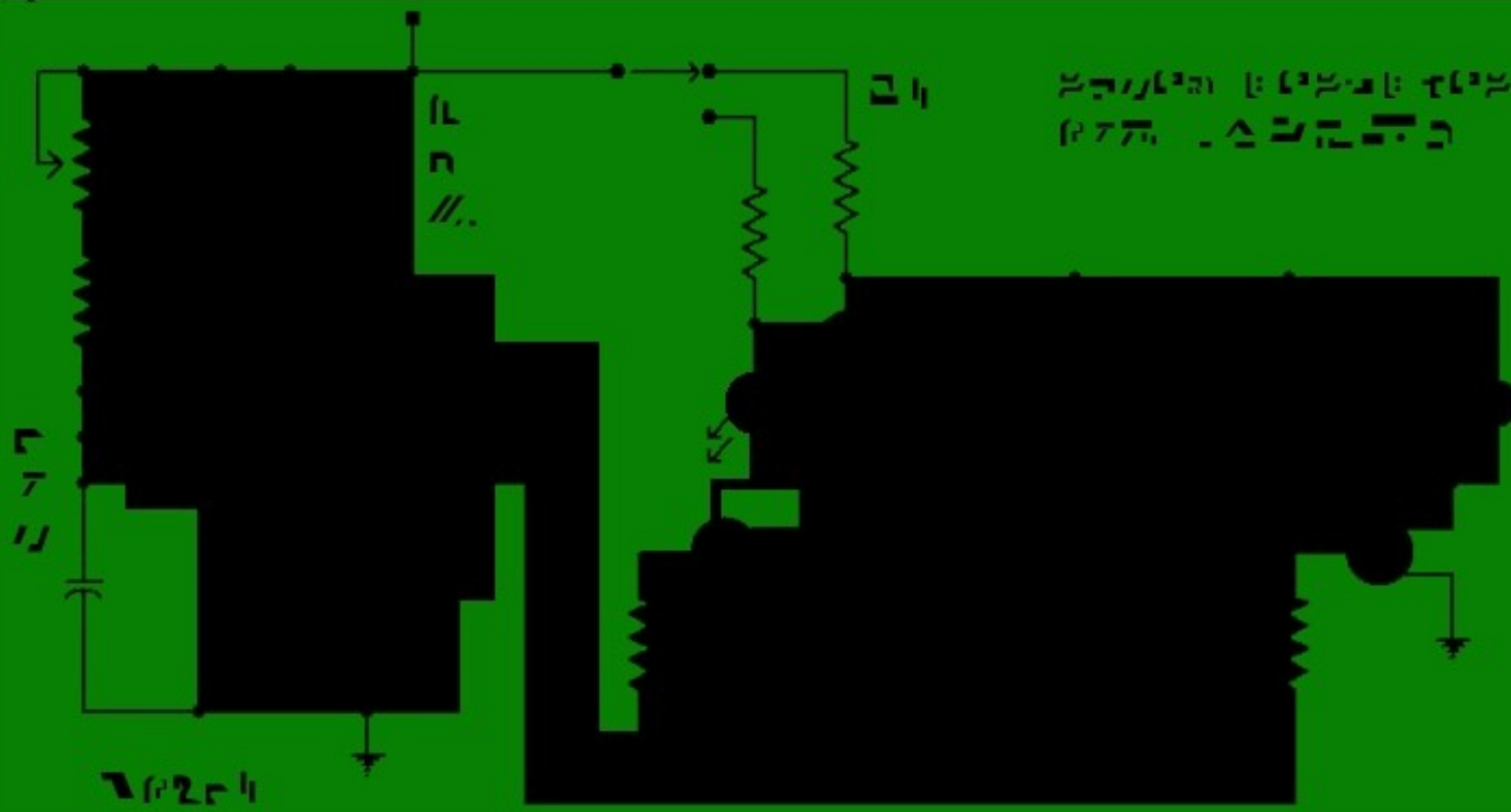


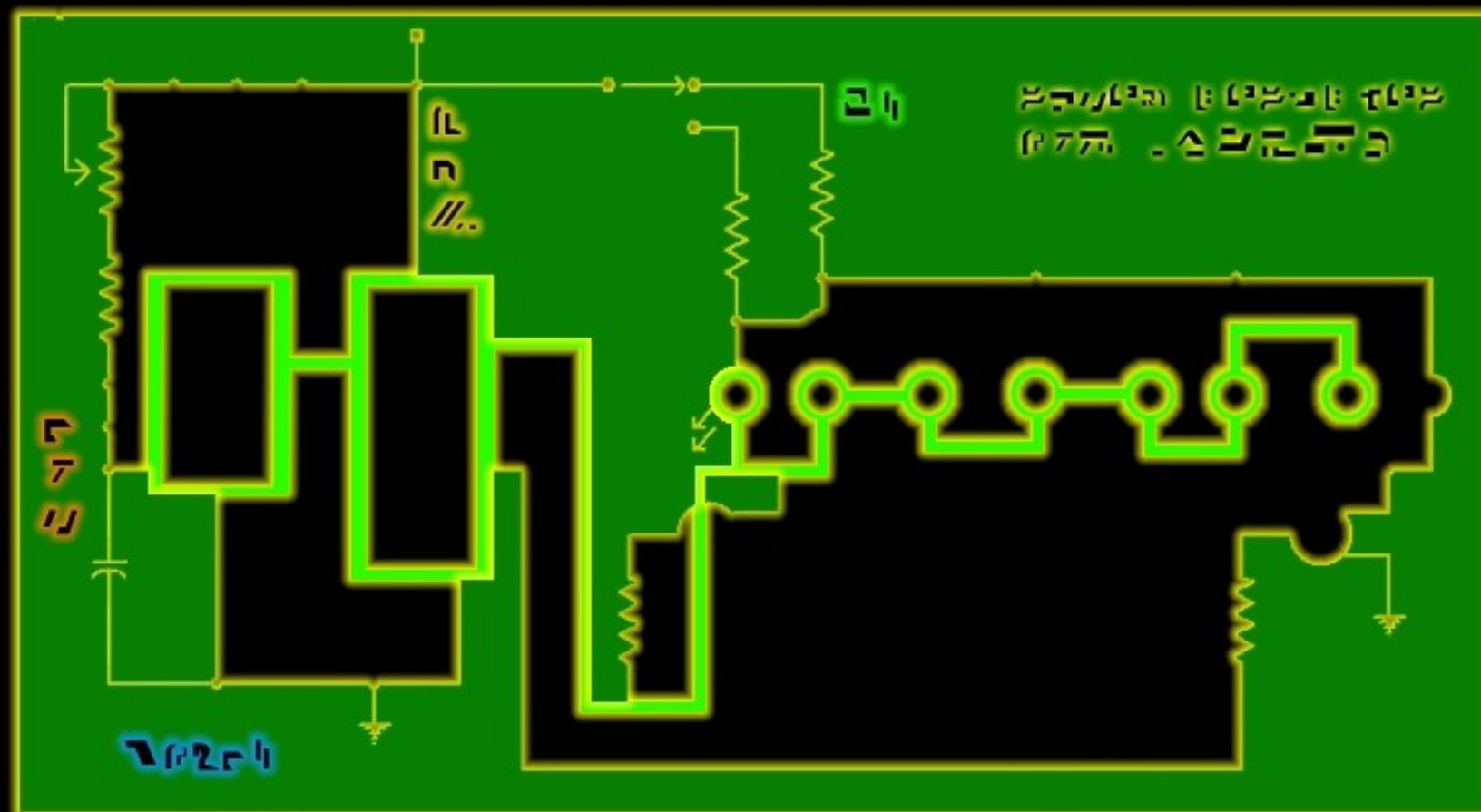






על ידי שילוב של (היטל) וקודקוד
 תיבנה תצורה של "היטל"





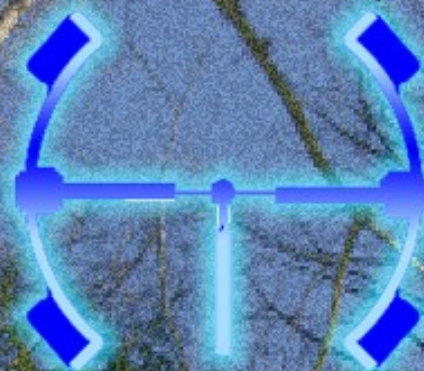




ACTIVE SCAN MODE ENGAGED...
REQUIRING TRANSPONDER DATA...
REQUIRING HOSTILE DATA...



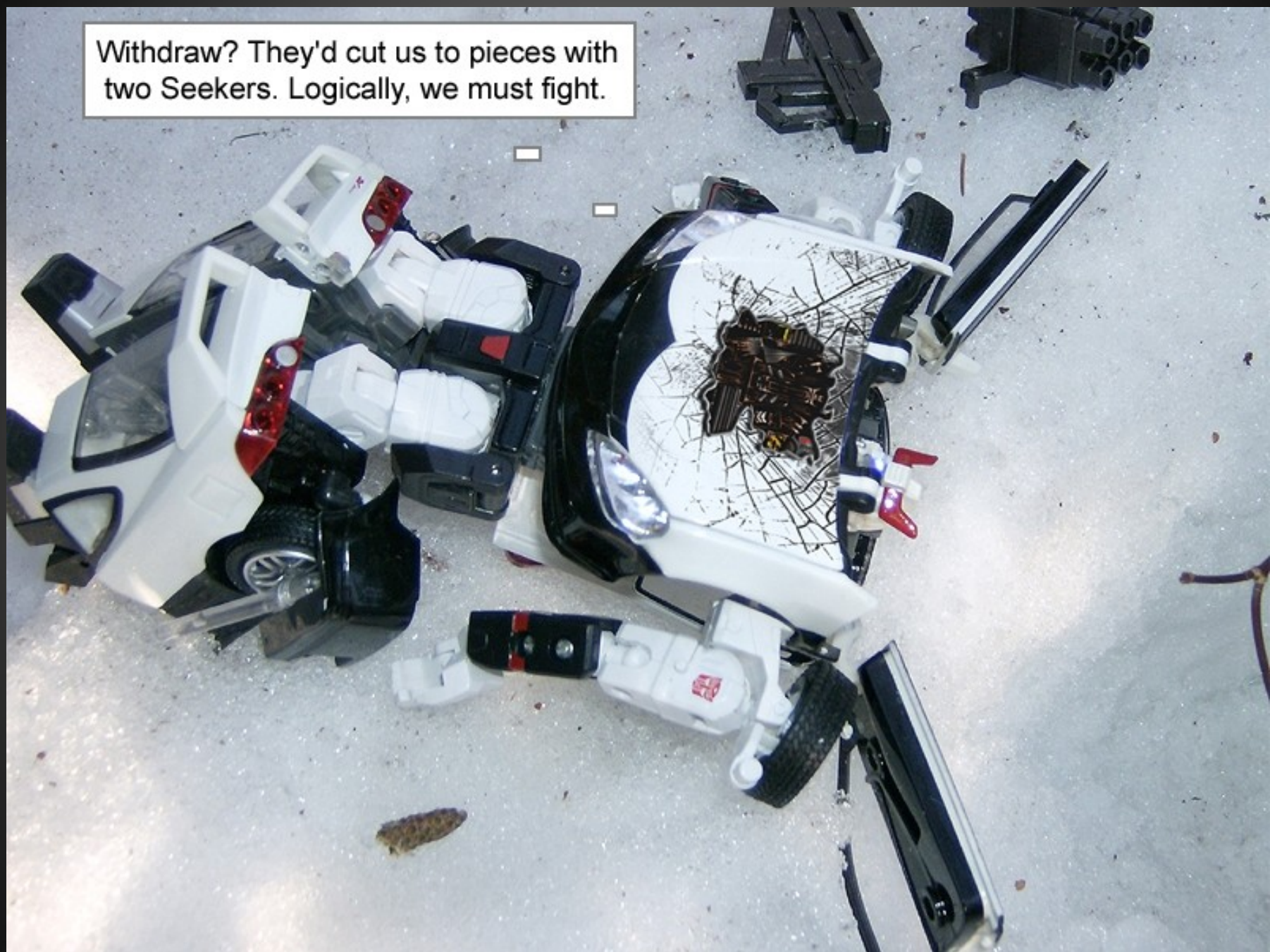
POSITIONAL DATA ACQUIRED
HOSTILE THREAT: CODE IE--25 26
AUTOBOT JAZZ: OFFLINE
AUTOBOT FRANK: ONLINE, NOT BATTLE READY



CURRENT DEFENSIVE ACTION: INADEQUATE
ESTIMATED TIME TO DEFENSIVE FAILURE: 1.35 SECONDS
SUGGESTED COURSE OF ACTION: WITHDRAW




Withdraw? They'd cut us to pieces with two Seekers. Logically, we must fight.





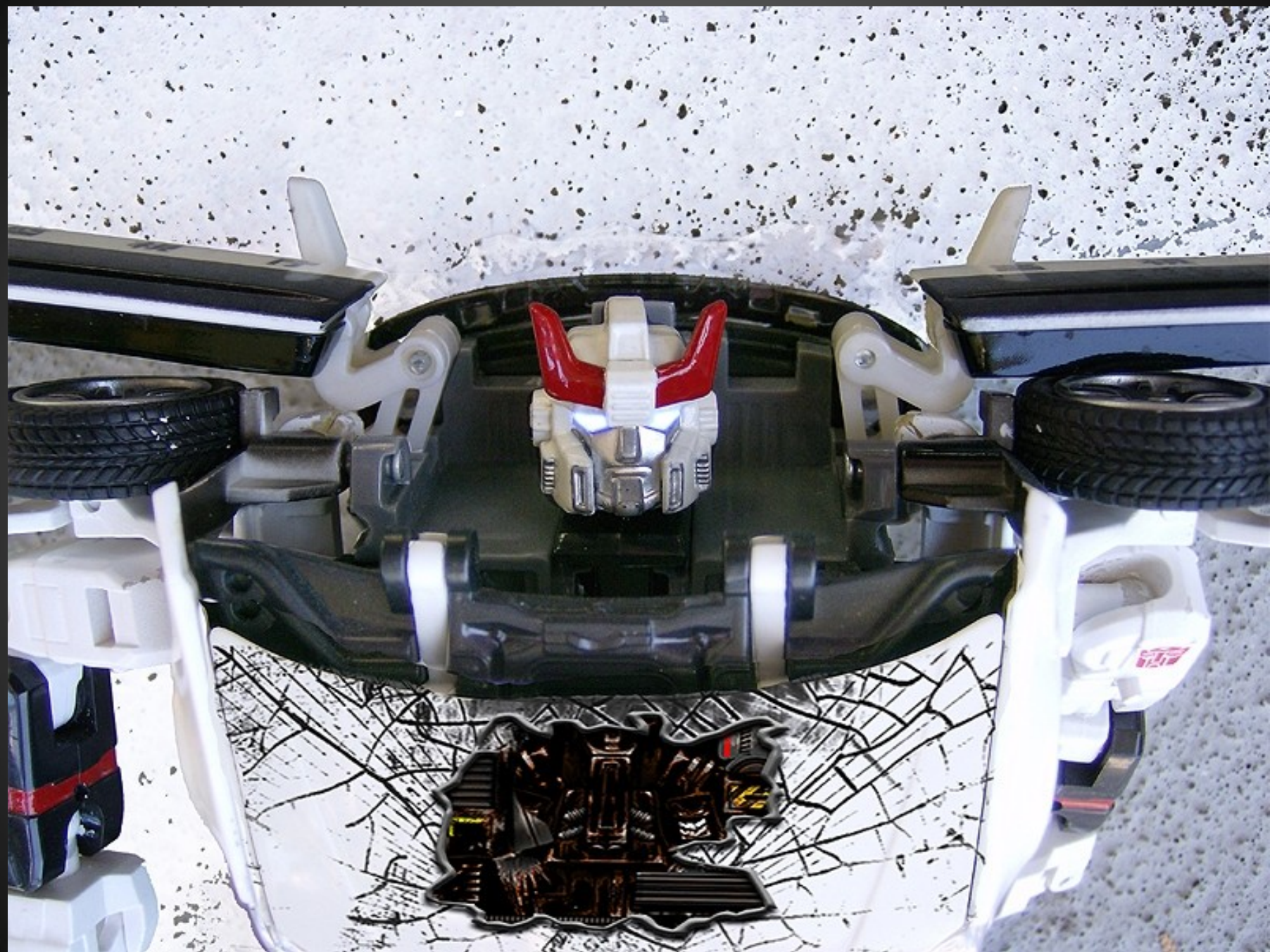
Equally logically, we are outclassed in this situation. A rally would only delay our defeat by approximately 5.36 breems, compared to a fighting withdrawal.

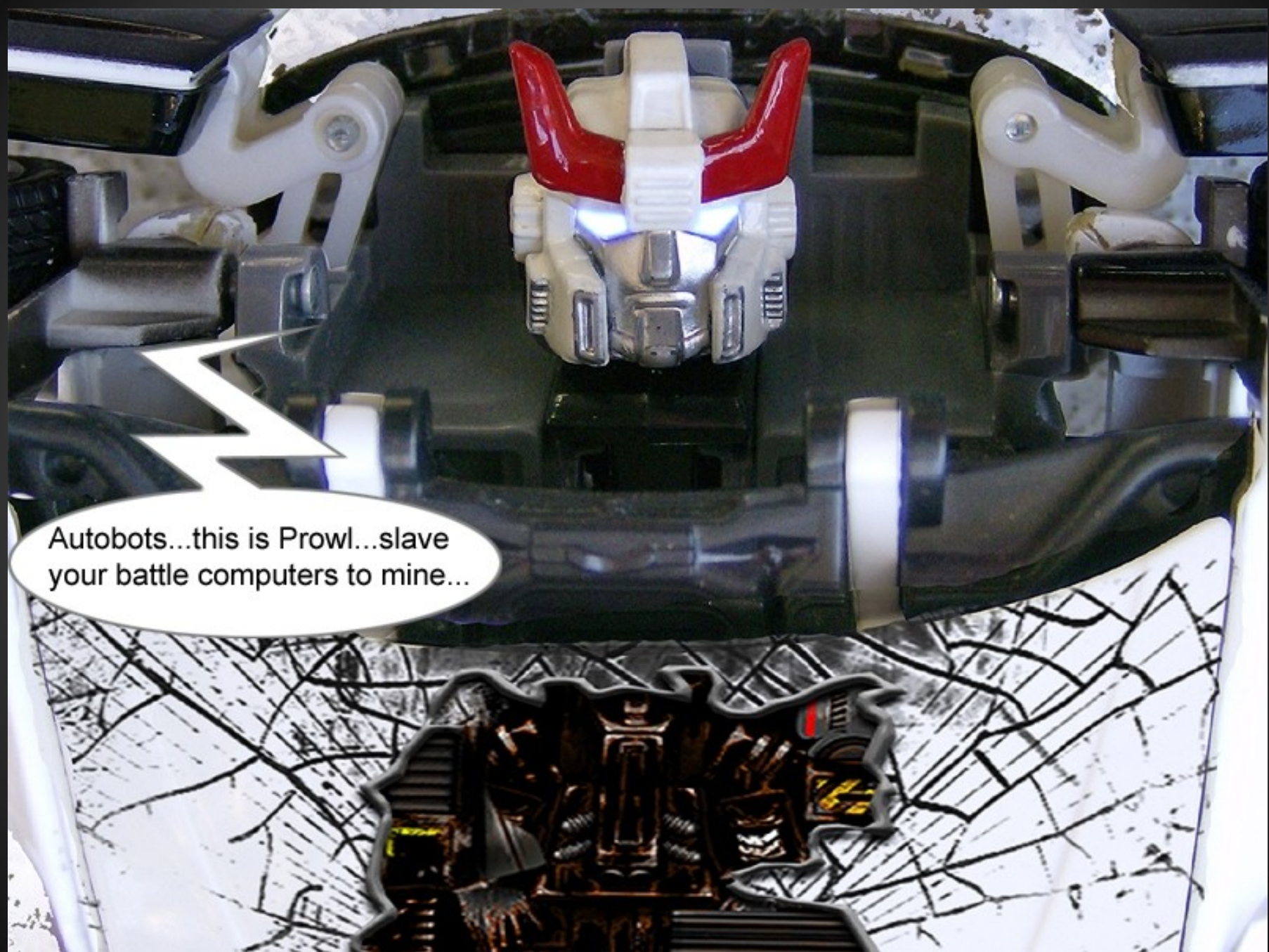


What would Optimus do? How does he derive plans that defy logic and yet still successfully work? How does he see what I cannot compute?

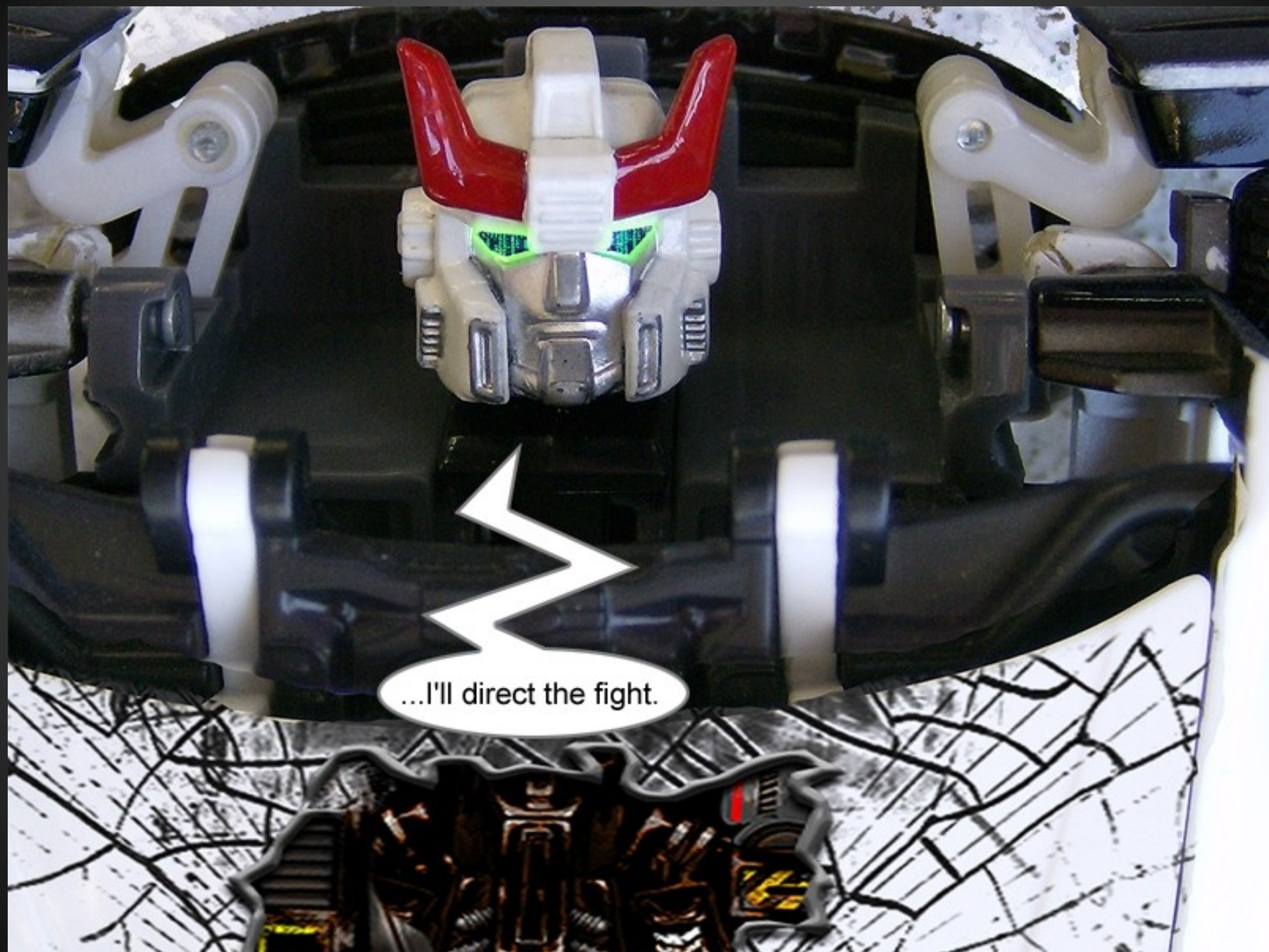
Never surrender...







Autobots...this is Prowl...slave
your battle computers to mine...



...I'll direct the fight.

AUTOBOT TACTICAL NETWORK ENGAGED.

**ENCRYPTED LINK TO SKYSPY AND FRIENDLY UNITS ACTIVE. FOUR
SLAVED CONNECTIONS CONFIRMED. FOUR HOSTILES CONFIRMED.**

**UNIT 'JAZZ' COMING OUT OF STASIS-LOCK IN 2.25
ASTROSECONDS. BATTLE COMPUTER SLAVE COMMAND QUEUED FOR
IMPLEMENTATION UPON REACTIVATION.
ESTIMATED COMBAT ABILITY: 85%**

1

2

3

4

5

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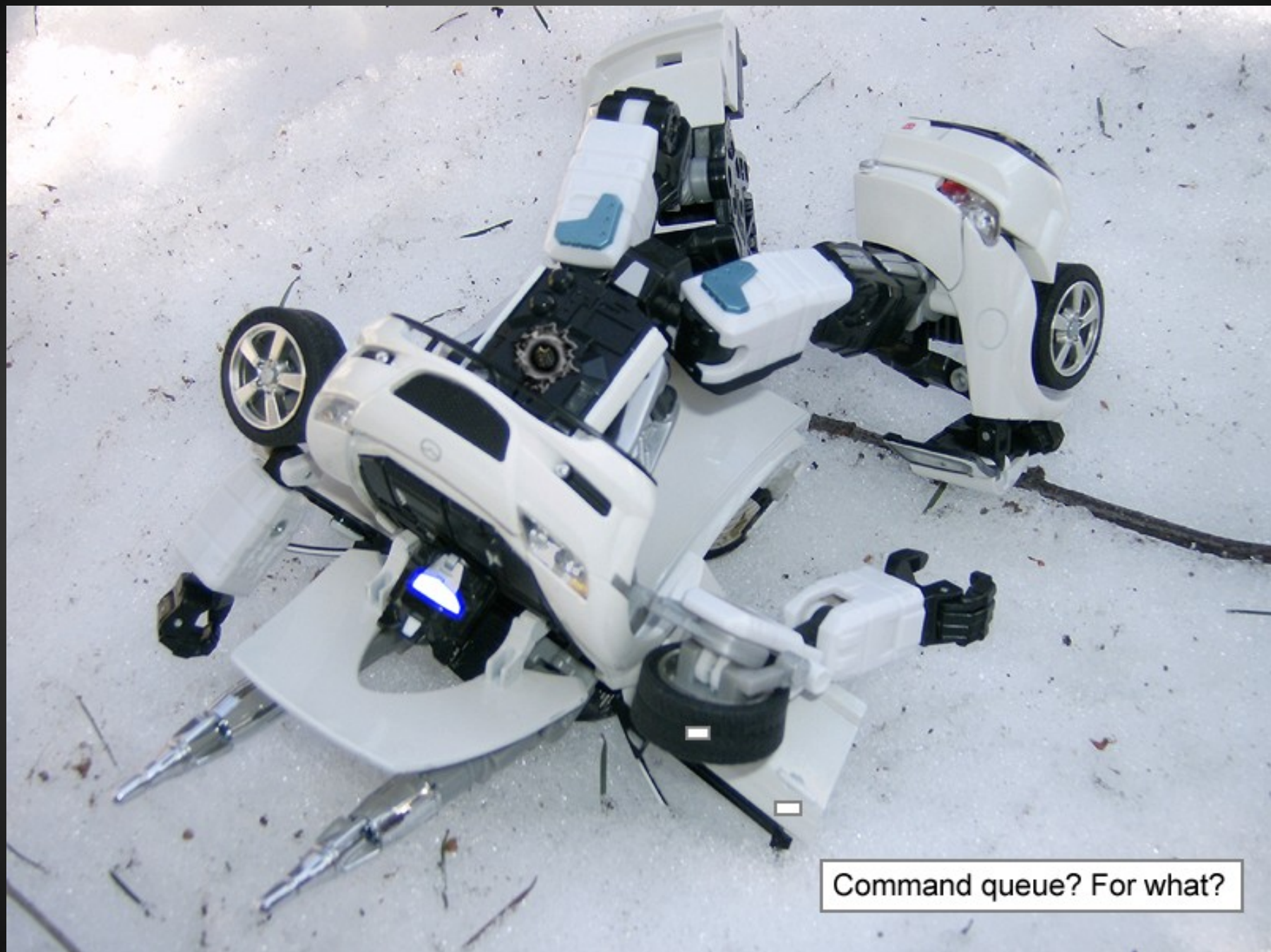








Uhhh....



Oh! Prowl, my man, you're a putz at times,
but you're hard core to the max in battle!
Let's ream these Cons an' send 'em back
to the Slag Maker shucked. This is gonna
be totally trippy, dude.






Ugh..c'mon, servos,
let's do this...ah!...

Your shield can handle
lasers, all right...

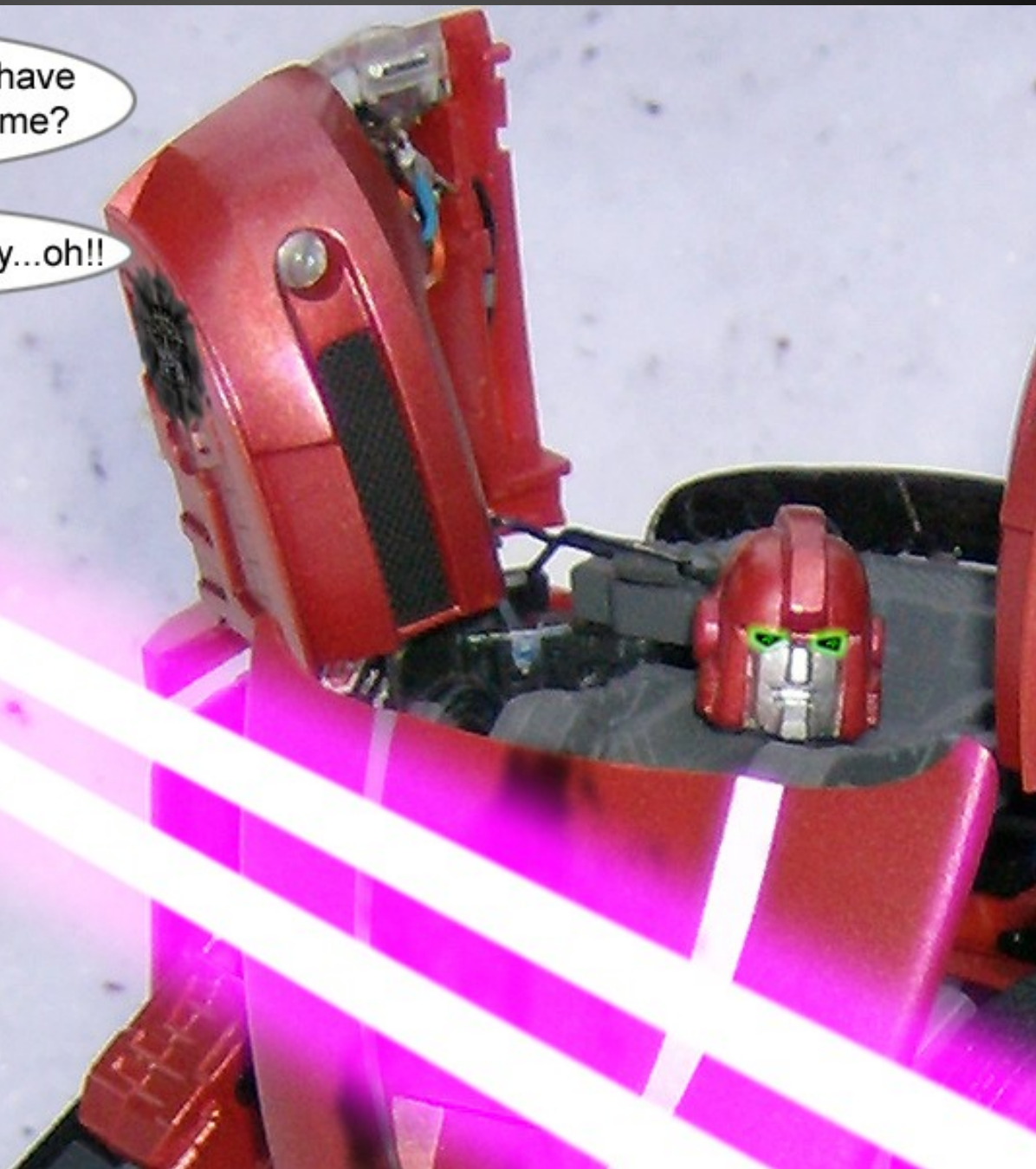



A black and purple Transformer robot, possibly a Jet Convoy, is lying on its back in a snowy environment. The robot has yellow lights on its chest and a red light on its head. It is surrounded by snow, dry sticks, and some evergreen branches. A speech bubble is positioned above the robot's head.

...let's see how it stands up
to a swarm of missiles!

C'mon Soundwave, do I have
t' stand still fer you to hit me?

Huh? Prowl, I'm a little busy...oh!!



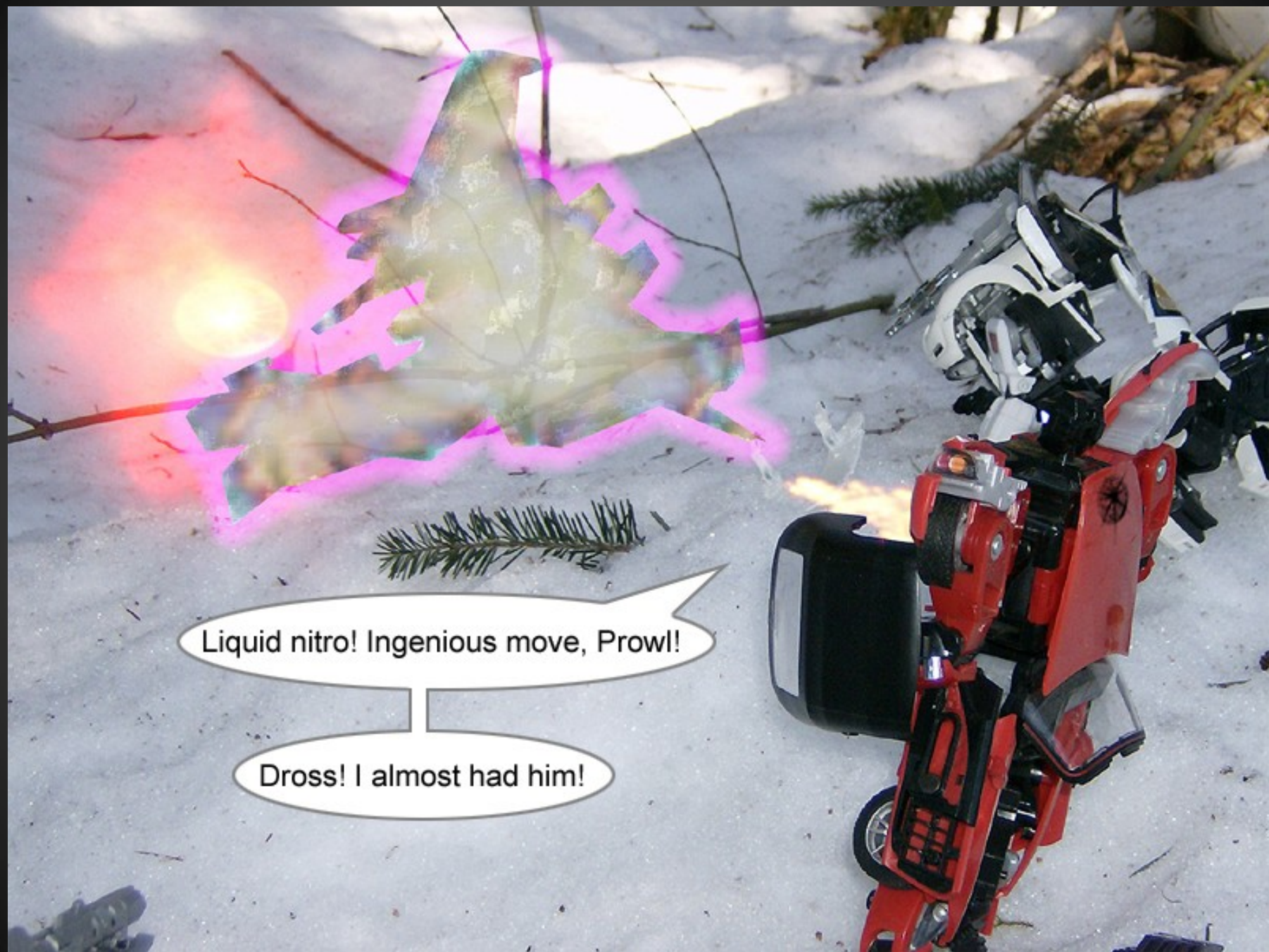
A scene from a Transformers fan video set in a snowy forest. On the left, Optimus Prime is partially visible. In the center, Ironhide is firing a red laser beam. On the right, a blue Transformer is firing a red laser beam. A red Transformer is in the foreground, and a black Transformer is in the background. The ground is covered in snow, and there are bare trees in the background.

Cool it, ya varmint!

AHH!

Cueing up pain and irony for you, Ironhide.

UH! Oh slag...he froze my launchers solid! And I can hardly move...

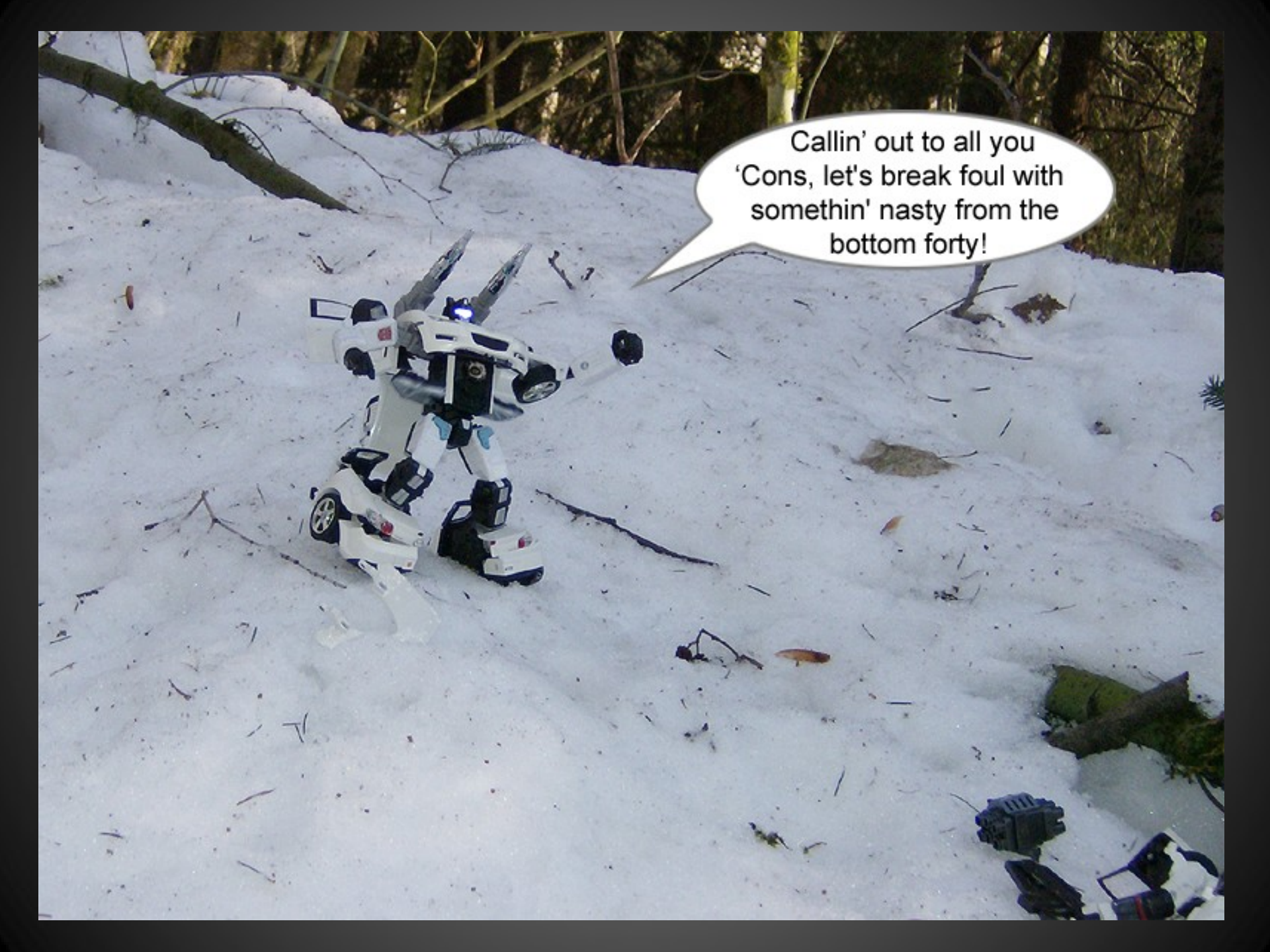


Liquid nitro! Ingenious move, Prowl!

Dross! I almost had him!

Your armour can only
hold so long, "Ironhide"!



A white and blue Transformer robot, resembling Optimus Prime, stands in a snowy forest. The robot has a blue visor and a red Autobot symbol on its chest. It is holding a black object in its right hand. The background is a dense forest with snow-covered ground and trees. A speech bubble is positioned above the robot's head.

Callin' out to all you
'Cons, let's break foul with
somethin' nasty from the
bottom forty!





AHH! Soundwave, do some-

-THIAA...*





Typical Autobot electronic warfare...







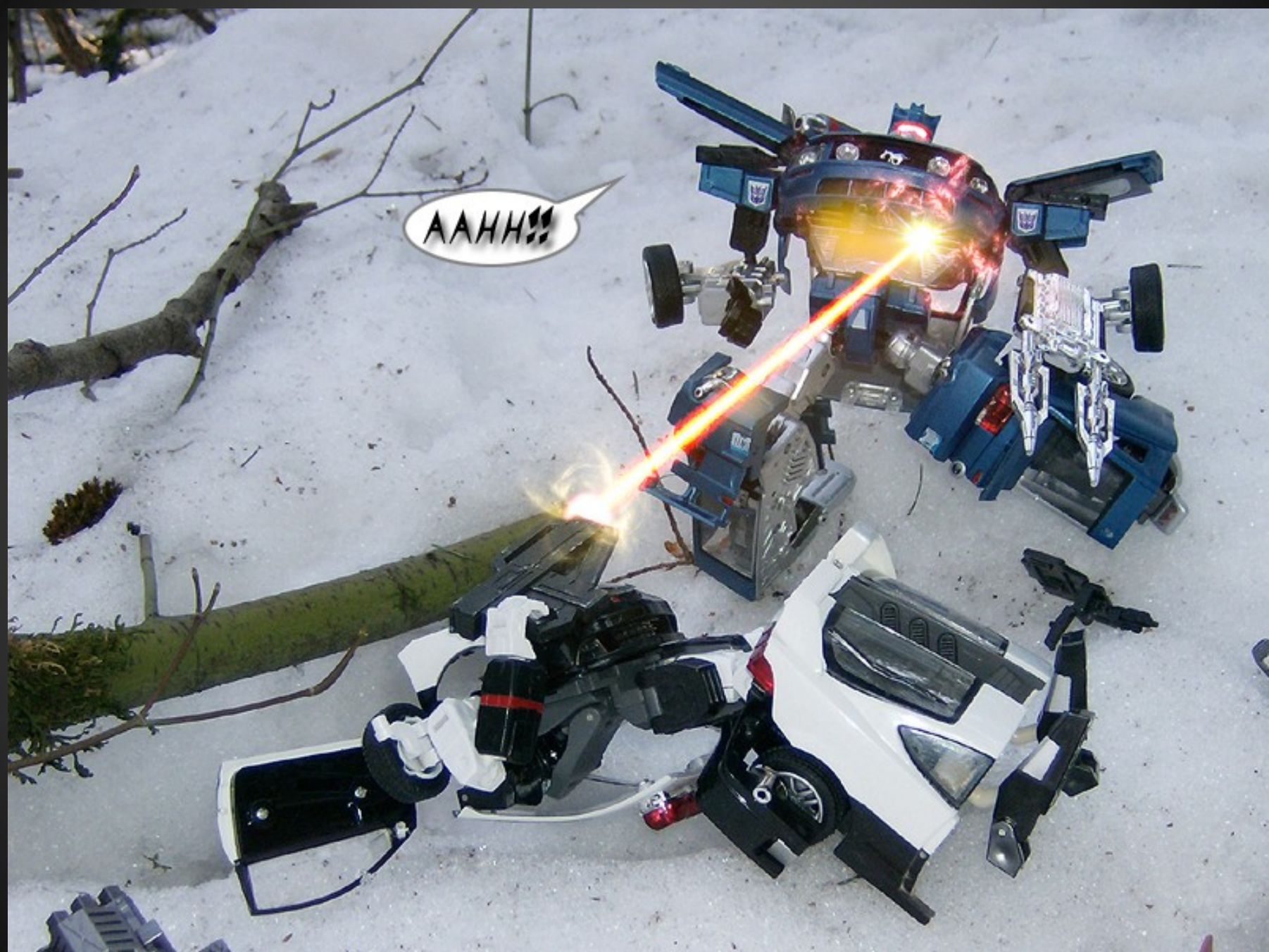


Prowl, what are you doing?!

The others...
need your...help.



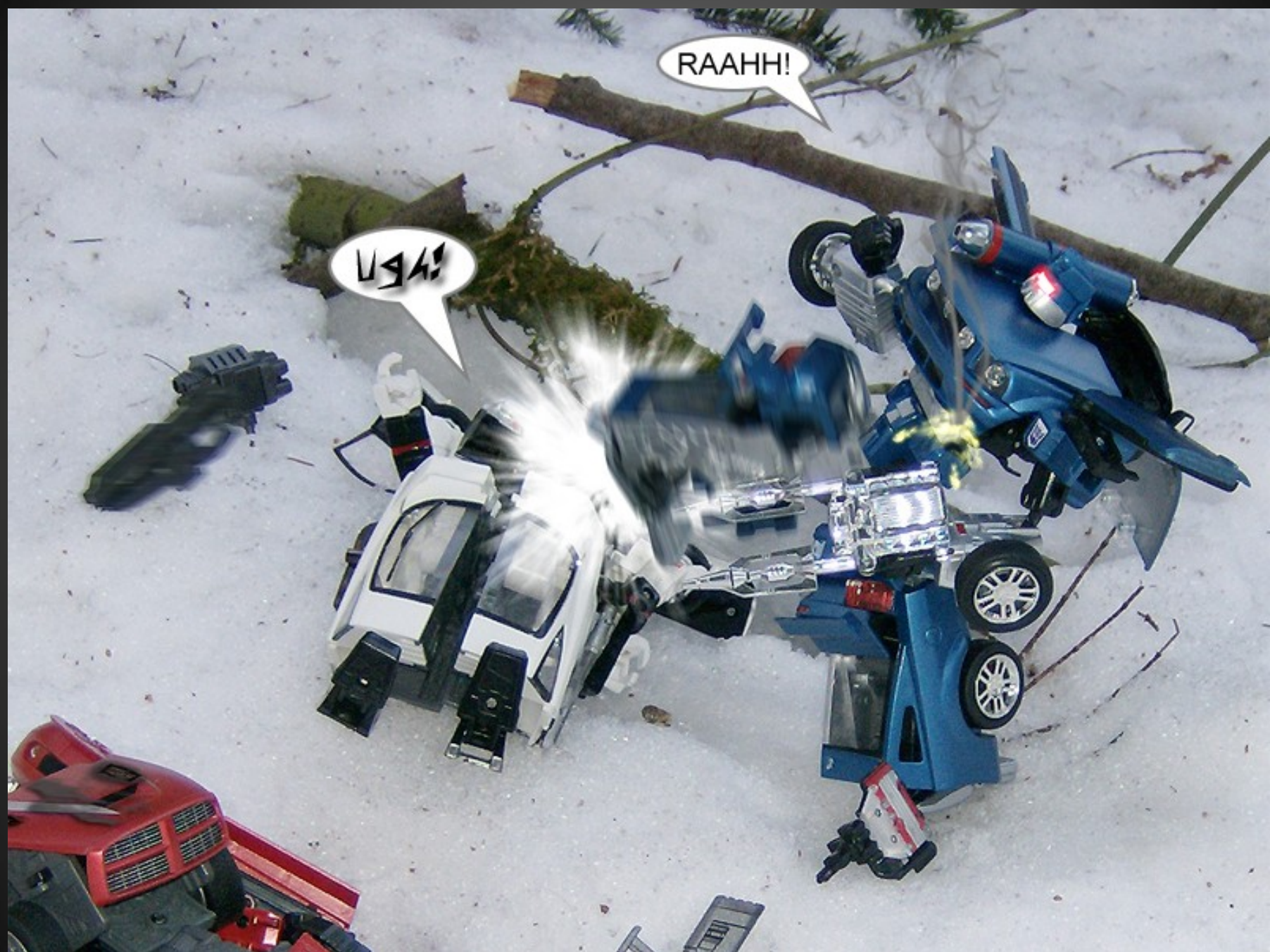







Ye heathenous 'Bots possess
corage, yet have not the wysdom to know
thine betters.





RAAHH!

WAAH!

A LEGO Technic rocket pack is shown firing two bright pink beams of light towards a red LEGO Technic car. The scene is set in a snowy, wooded area with snow-covered ground and dark tree trunks in the background. The rocket pack is blue and black, and the car is red with black wheels. A large, bright yellow and white explosion is visible where the beams hit the ground between the two vehicles.


I'm half hoping he hits me,
if it means I won't have to listen to
his prattle.

What I wouldn't give
for my rocket-pack...

A photograph of several Transformers toys lying in a snowy, outdoor environment. In the upper right, a blue Transformer vehicle (likely a GT) is partially crushed. In the center, a white Transformer vehicle is heavily damaged and overturned. To its right, another blue Transformer vehicle is also crushed. Various mechanical parts, including a black gun-like piece and a red and silver engine component, are scattered on the snow. Two speech bubbles are overlaid on the image, suggesting a narrative of destruction.

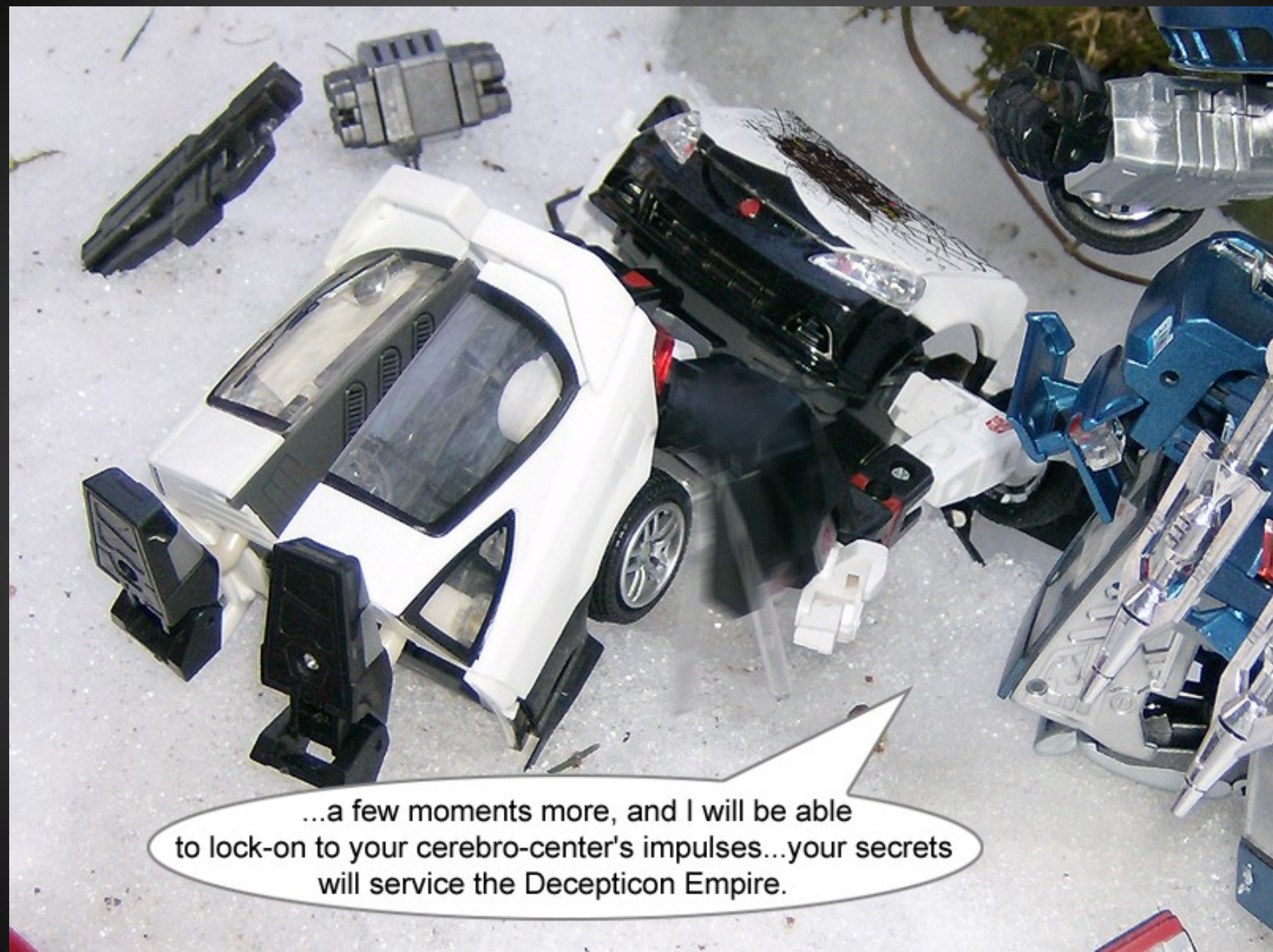
Oooohhh...

Suffering: a melodic sound.
It will end soon, Prowl...

A photograph of a snowy outdoor scene. In the upper left, a blue toy car is partially buried in the snow. In the lower right, a red toy car is also partially buried. Between the two cars, a small fire is burning, with orange flames and a wisp of white smoke rising from it. The ground is covered in a layer of snow, with some dry leaves and twigs scattered around. Two speech bubbles are overlaid on the image, one above the blue car and one below the red car.

Prowl, what...oh!

Oh, boy...




...a few moments more, and I will be able to lock-on to your cerebro-center's impulses...your secrets will service the Decepticon Empire.



Here's a thought you
don't need to decode!

UAAH!

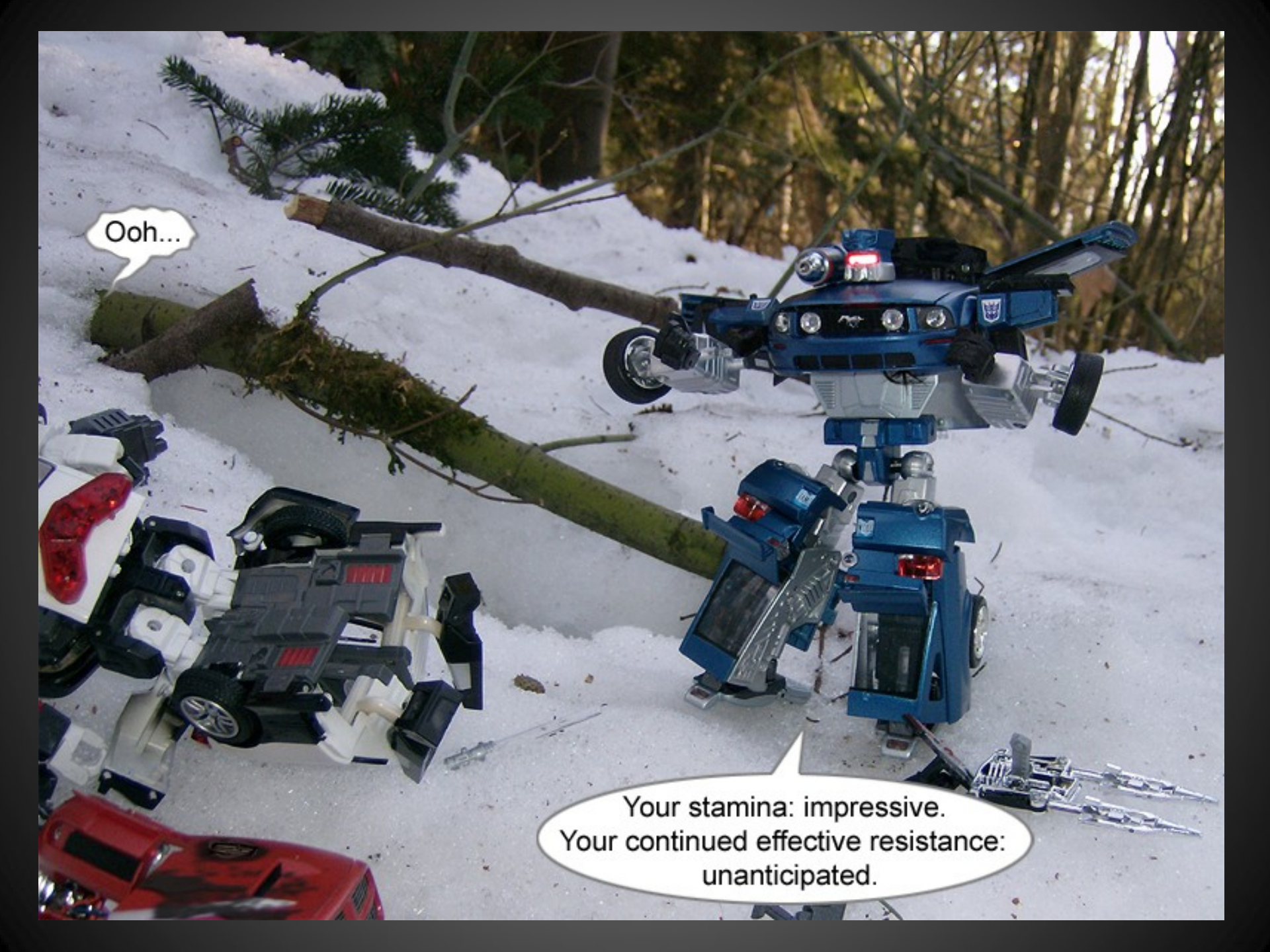




Now wol I torne un-to
mine enymies, an' reape retribution
most foule.





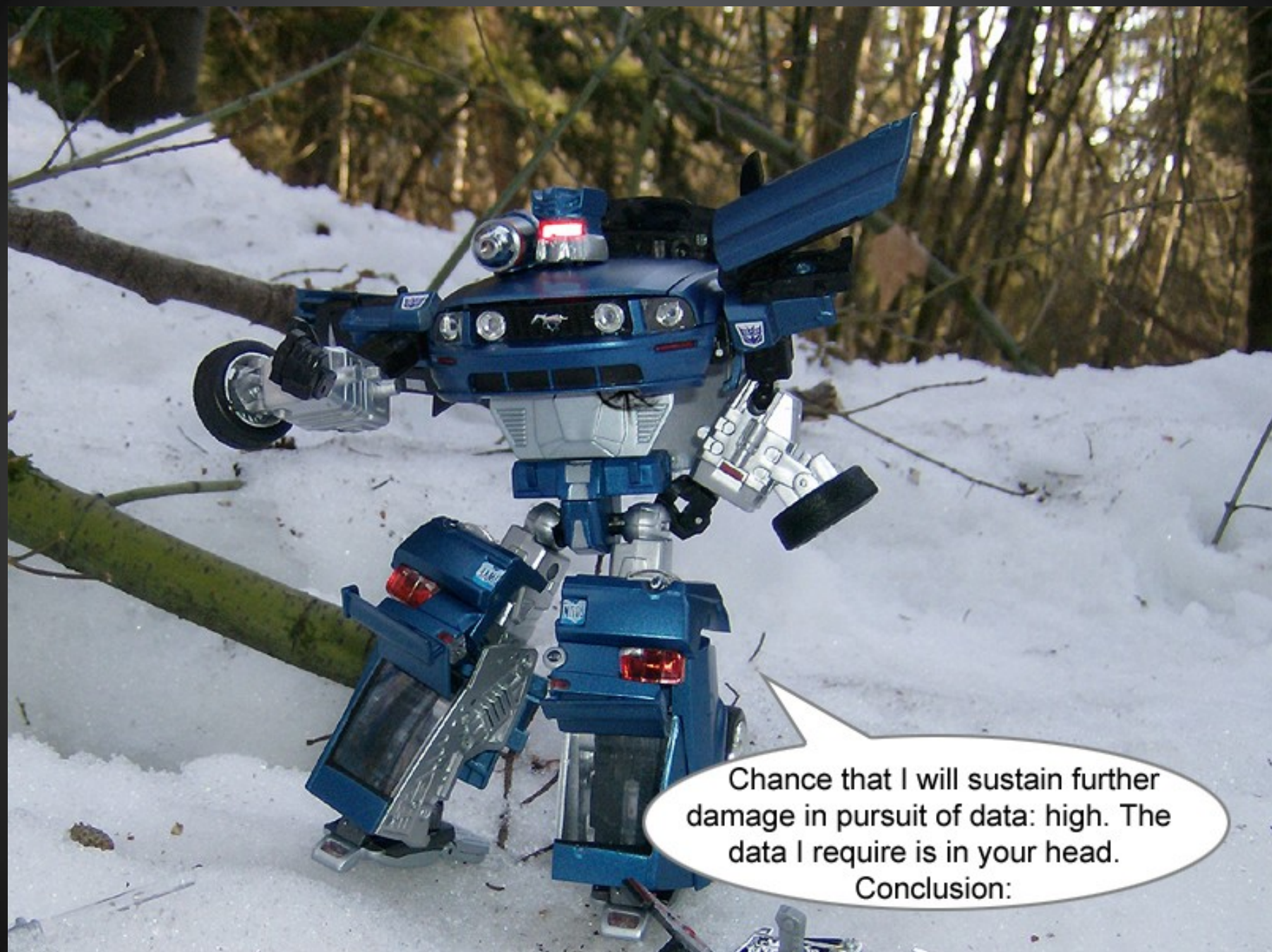


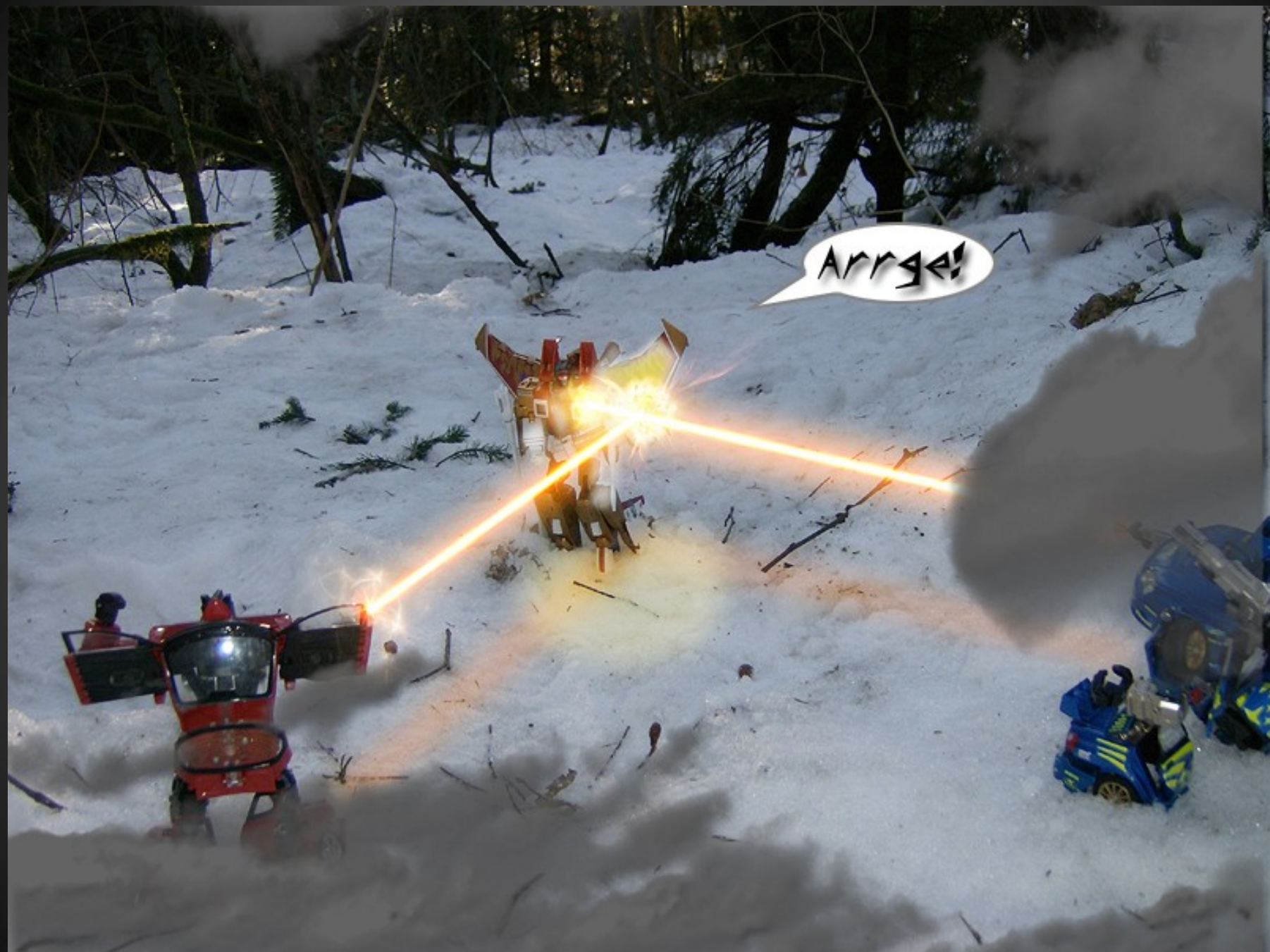
Ooh...

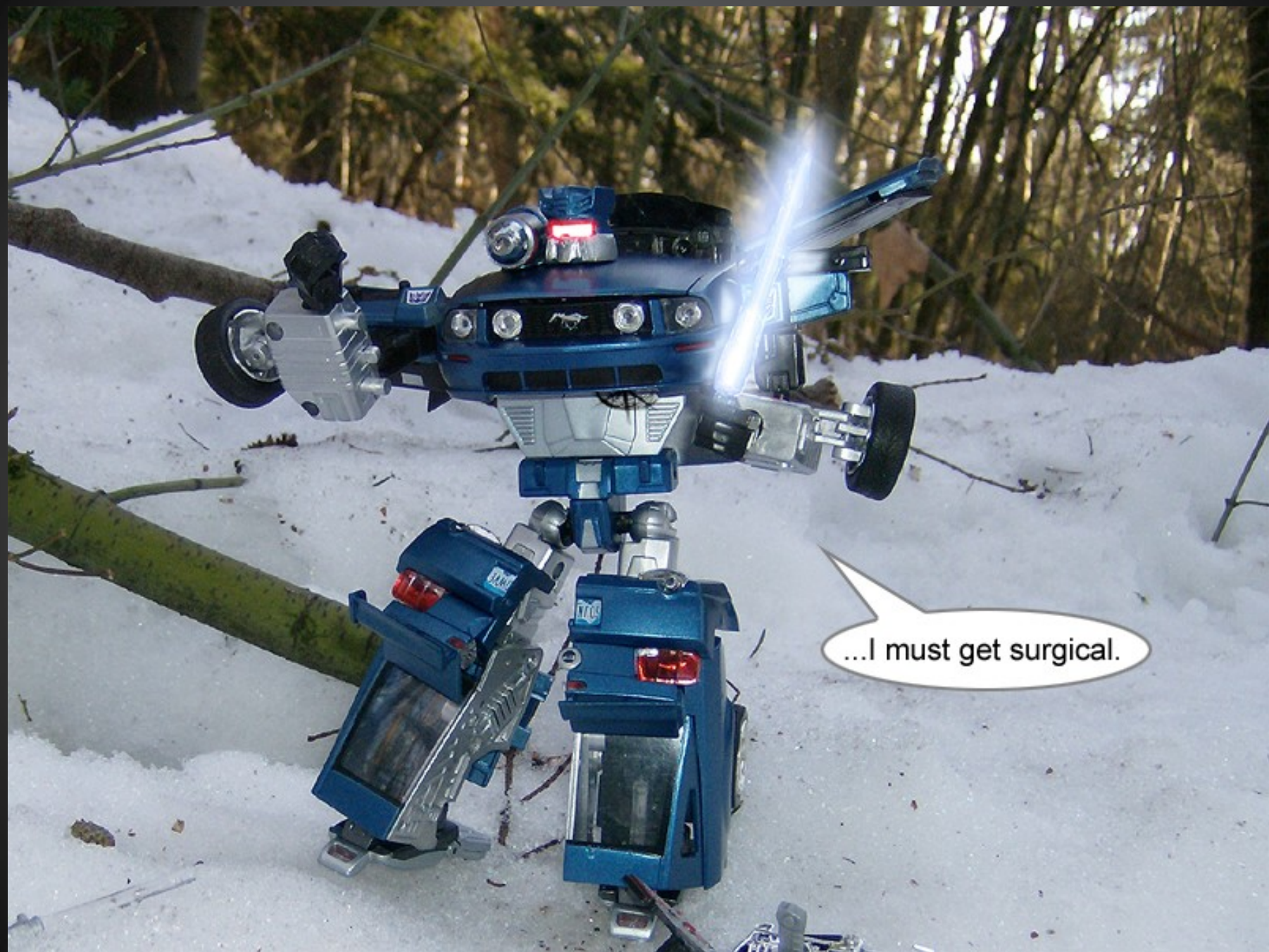
The image shows a scene from a Transformers movie. Optimus Prime, a blue and silver robot, stands on the right side of the frame. He has a red light on his forehead and is looking towards the left. On the left, Sentinel Prime, a white and black robot, is lying on his back, appearing to be in a state of defeat or death. A large, moss-covered tree trunk lies across the snow in the background. The ground is covered in a layer of snow, and the background shows a dense forest of bare trees. A speech bubble from Sentinel Prime says "Ooh...". Another speech bubble from Optimus Prime says "Your stamina: impressive. Your continued effective resistance: unanticipated."

Your stamina: impressive.
Your continued effective resistance:
unanticipated.

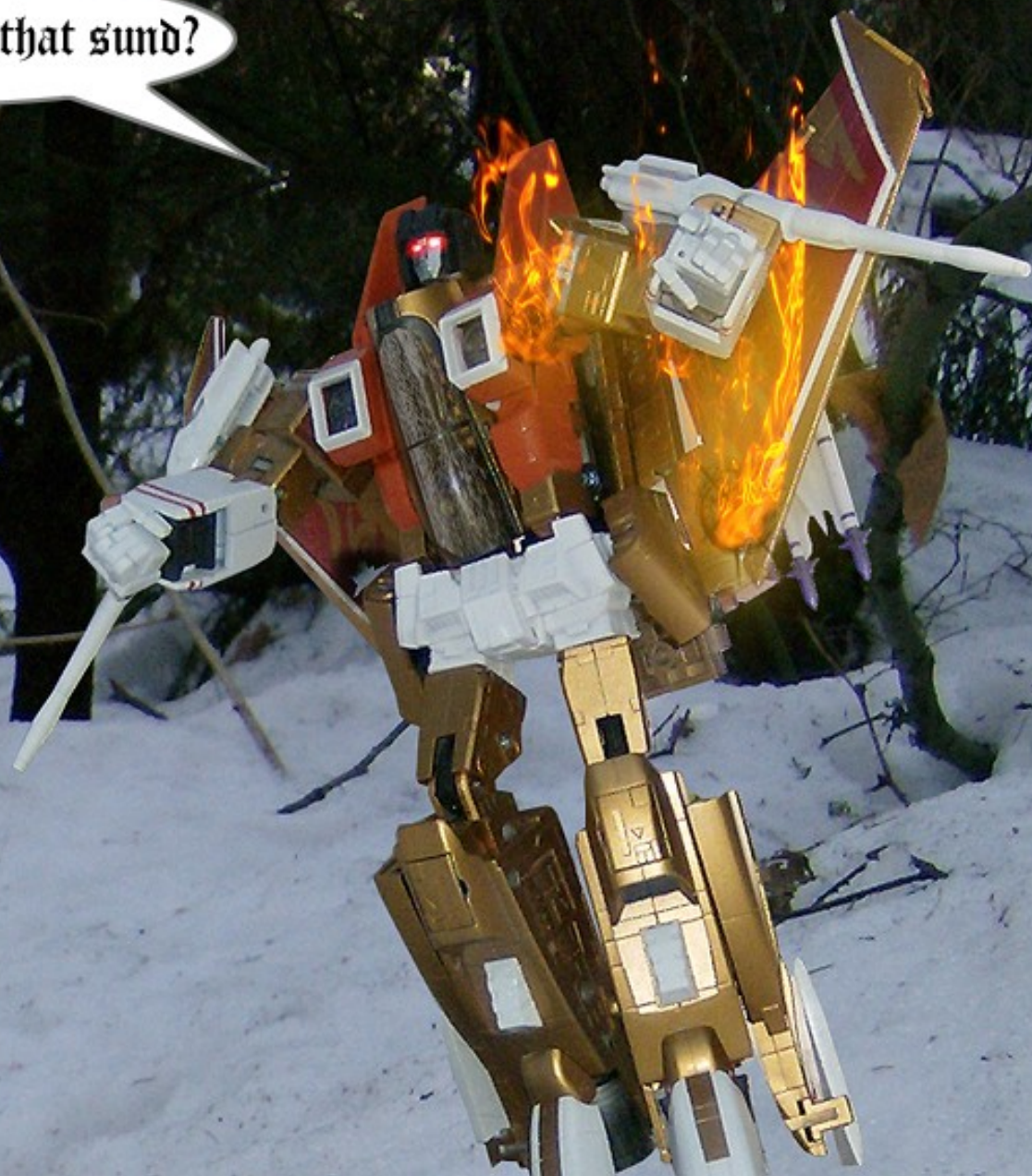






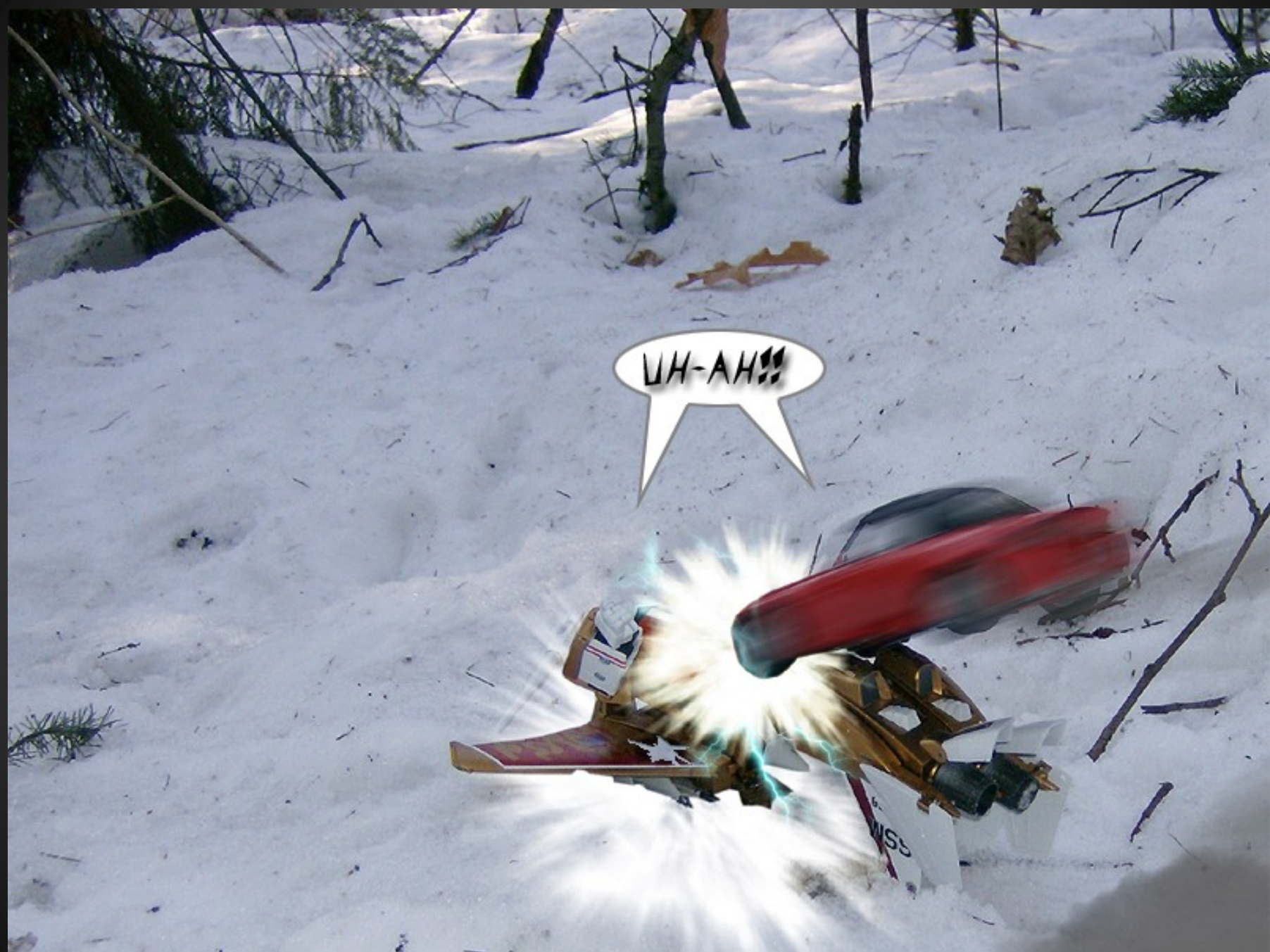


Hark! What is that sound?

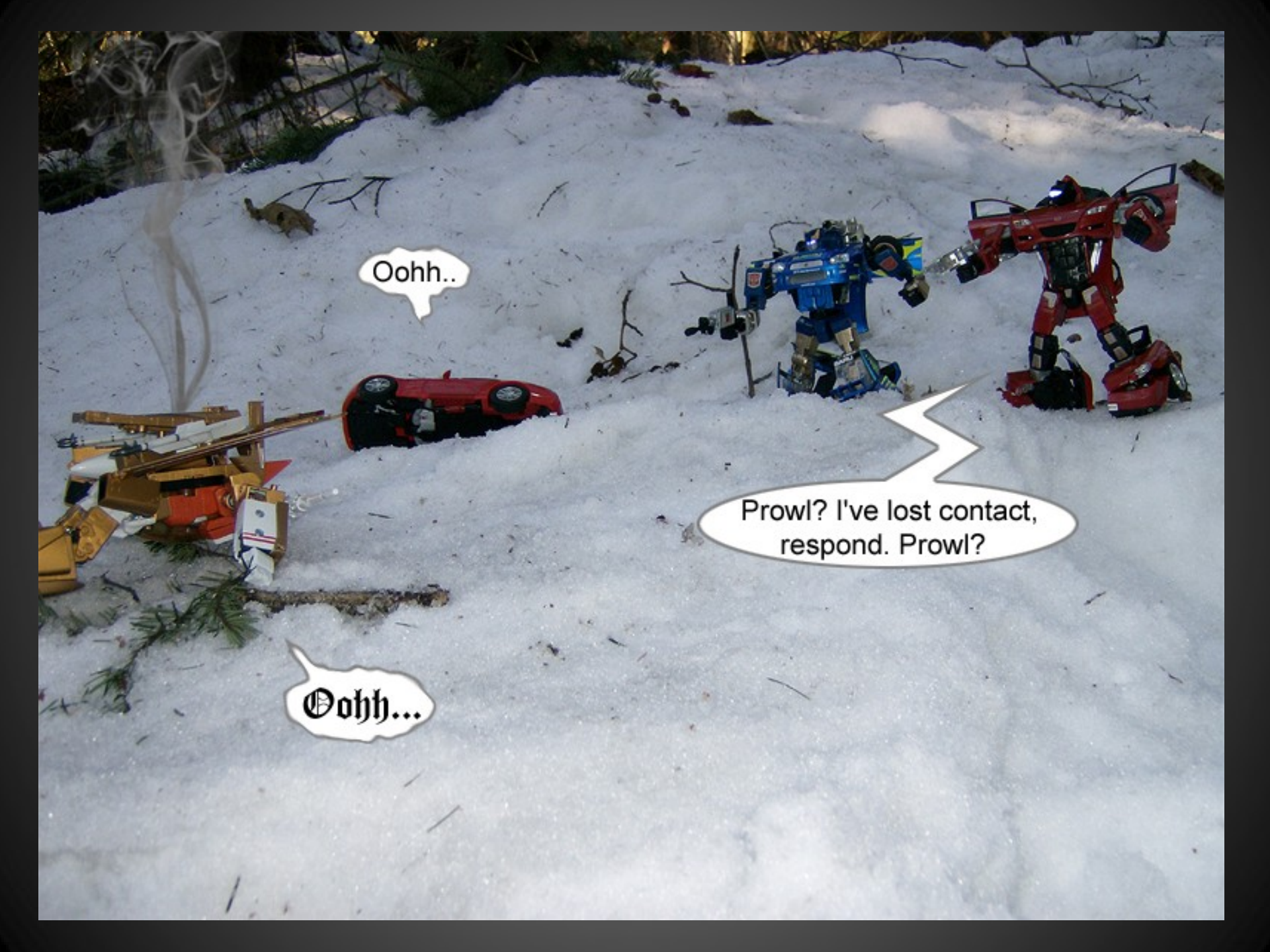




...oh noes...



UH-AH!!

A photograph of a snowy forest floor with several Transformers toys. On the left, a yellow and red Transformer (likely a construction vehicle) is partially buried in the snow, with a wisp of white smoke rising from it. In the center, a red sports car (likely a Cybertron) is lying on its side, also partially buried. To the right, two larger Transformers are standing: one is blue and yellow (likely Optimus Prime) and the other is red (likely Prowl). They are facing each other. The background shows snow-covered ground and some evergreen trees.

Oohh..

Prowl? I've lost contact,
respond. Prowl?


Oohh...



You've given me many
reasons to terminate you today,
Sunstorm...go on.

Surrender, or I'll frag you now.




A photograph of a snowy landscape with several toy cars and a model city. In the upper left, a model city is engulfed in a bright yellow and orange fire, with multiple yellow lightning bolts striking it. In the lower center, a red toy car is overturned. To its right, a blue toy car is also overturned. Further right, another red toy car is on its side. A trail of red and pink paint or powder leads from the overturned cars towards the right. The background shows snow-covered ground and some evergreen trees.

A...most valyant
stuggle, Autobots...

AAA!

OOA!

A digital artwork featuring a brown and white fighter jet, possibly a MiG-29, flying through a dense forest. The jet is angled upwards and to the right, with its afterburners glowing bright blue. The sun is visible through the trees in the background, creating a lens flare effect. A speech bubble is positioned in the lower-left corner, containing a quote in a stylized, blackletter font.

..I shall return, an' we
shall fight ful to a bot 'till the
score be ebene!



What a nutter.

Oohh...stop the planet
please, I'd like to get off.

You okay?

Prowl's timing is impeccable,
but I wish he'd have used someone
else as a battering ram...



We're going to see
why we've lost contact with Prowl.
Stay here.



Right...I'll hold this bank
up while you're gone...

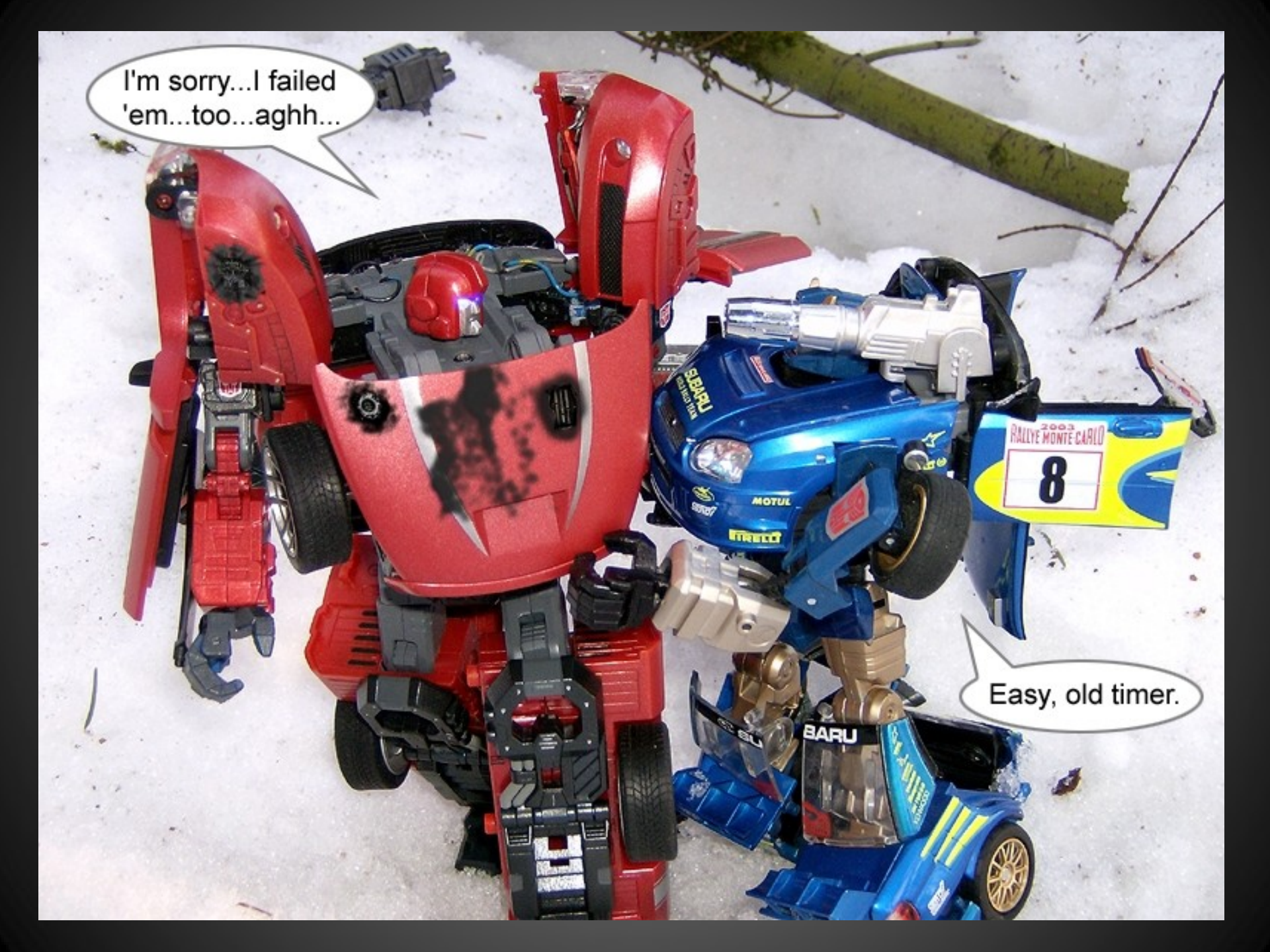


Epilogue

He's in S-lock, but stable.







I'm sorry...I failed
'em...too...aghh...

Easy, old timer.

You did everything you
could. You're one of the reasons
we're still on-line.



Some rescue...six go
in, five go out, two essentially
off-line.



Tarnation...we've...been
tarred...and feathered...



Slaggin' dross, let's
get back to the Ark.







TRANSFORMERS:

RETRIBUTION

XTRAS

Alternate HUD shot for Smokescreen

