

CZO502: BRO - TRANSFORMERS (DECEPTICONS)

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- 1) INTRO JLK & Jordan

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In The Brothers' War Set and Collector booster packs you can find TRANSFORMER cards. These are Universes Beyond cards and they have their own set code: BOT. They aren't Standard-legal but they are legal in Legacy, Vintage and Commander.

Now, there are 15 of these Transformer cards and they're ALL legendary creatures. If you know anything about the property, the good guys are Autobots and the bad guys are the Decepticons. On this episode we're going to talk about the 7 Decepticons. The prior episode discussed the Autobots and that's with Josh and Jordan.

BUT FIRST:

****CARDKINGDOM.COM/COMMAND** **ULTRAPRO #1** **PATREON: DALLAS ROBERTS****

2) MAIN TOPIC: DECEPTICONS SET REVIEW (TRANSFORMERS)

Again Transformer cards only come in Set and Collector Booster packs from The Brothers' War. They are available in two styles 1) Regular and 2) Shattered Glass. The shattered glass version can only be opened in Collector's Boosters.

HOW DO TRANSFORMERS WORK?

There are a lot of rules and mechanics surrounding the Transformers cards, but if you want a deep dive into those, check out the previous episode. Now, the Decepticon cards:

MEGATRON, TYRANT // MEGATRON, DESTRUCTIVE FORCE

*Front side wants to do a lot of damage to all opponents for a BIG mana influx - draws some similarity to **Belbe, Corrupted Observer** but only for yourself - and you can conceivably get 20+ mana with this effect. Vehicle side wants high Mana Value artifacts to sacrifice (if you kill the creature with excess damage, you get to go back to the front side).*

RECURSION Anytime you're sacrificing artifacts for value, a card like **Scrap Trawler** or **Myr Retriever** can turn into recursion loops. Lots more ways to do this for artifacts, look it up! Red opens you up to lots of Artifact trickery with **Goblin Welder**, **Goblin Engineer**, and **Daretti, Scrap Savant** and **Feldon of the Third Path** if you're creature heavy. A new Warhammer card is **Anrakyr the Traveler** which means you'll want those discard outlets with things like **Angel of the Ruins** or **Ruin Grinder**.

HURT EVERYONE You don't need to do a lot of damage when the same amount hits multiple players- **Tectonic Giant**; **Crackling Doom**; **Chandra, Torch of Defiance** but don't forget it's also LOSS of life so **Grey Merchant of Asphodel** and **Heartless Hidetsugu** (remove on sight!) will also pay big bucks.

HIGH MV FODDER **Spine of Ish Sah** (great to sacrifice); **Metalwork Colossus**; **Ancient Stone Idol**; **Scion of Draco** are all huge and can do a lot of damage. **Phyrexian Triniform** is a gift that keeps on giving thanks to Encore.

ALL THIS MANA! When you gain a ton of mana, use it to end the game quickly! **Exsanguinate** or **Torment of Hailfire** are obvious powerhouses - they also work with lower mana costs if you're just looking to gain mana off of Megatron first, THEN cast a **Jaya's Immolating Inferno**, or **Comet Storm**, or milling / killing someone with **Damnable Pact**. This is an expensive mana value deck thanks to all these high drops, so make sure you give yourself some ways to get the cards out like **Purphoros, Bronze-Blooded**; **Sneak Attack**; **Through the Breach**

LIVING METAL Since Megatron's vehicle side is not a creature on other players turns, a card like **Blood for the Blood God** might be devastating for your opponents.

SOUNDWAVE, SONIC SPY // SOUNDWAVE, SUPERIOR CAPTAIN

The tokens the backside makes both have evasion, and the front side benefits from evasive tokens because that's how you get to cast your opponents stuff. Either they've cast it or you've found a way to mill it / discard it into the graveyard. BUT this card has one important caveat that isn't obvious on a first read. In order to cast an instant or sorcery spell from an opponent's graveyard, your tokens must have hit them for EXACTLY the amount of damage equal to that spell's mana value. Not more.

TOKENS MATTER Look no further than Warhammer for some great includes in this deck: **Marneus Calgar**; **Vanguard Suppressor**; **Ultramarines Honour Guard**. (If you care about triggering Soundwave an anthem can be tricky since it can make it harder to hit an opponent for an exact number equal to the MV of their spell. When you have no 1/1s it's tougher.). Other great token creation methods are **Bitterblossom**; **Shark Typhoon**; **Inkshield**. Get extra value by drawing cards with **Curiosity Crafter** and make them evasive with **Aven Wind Guide**. Double up your token creation with **Anointed Procession**.

MILL SPELLS Having cards to target in your opponents' graveyards will be tough if you're just waiting for them to cast the spell. Better to build in some easy mill so you've got lots of options - **Mindcrank**; **Altar of the Brood**; **Court of Cunning**; **Consuming Aberration**; **Maddening Cacophony**; and perhaps the most efficient table mill of all time, **Mesmeric Orb**.

SPELLS = TOKENS If you're casting spells out of your opponents' graveyards, why not double up on the value and get some token creation of your own going? **Murmuring Mystic**; **Deekah, Fractal Theorist**; **Talrand, Sky Summoner**; **Monastery Mentor**. Later in the game, cards like **The Scarab God** can help swing things back in your favor.

EXACTSIES If you hit for 4 damage and want to cast a 3 MV instant/sorcery, it won't work. Which means you're going to really need to get exactly the right amount of damage in to your opponents. However, they can easily disrupt your plan by simply removing one of your attackers, so how do you make sure to hit players for the right amount? Seems really easy to mess up someone's plans when they swing with 5 power to try and cast your 5 MV spell. Assuming your opponents can't remove any attackers, it seems like stacking 1/1s is the easiest to get the number you want. **Thopter Spy Network** and **Sharding Sphinx** play really well together, and also can create a large number of 1/1s. It's just very easy to see what the Soundwave deck is going after and make it so they don't hit that exact amount of damage.

STARSCREAM, POWER HUNGRY // STARSCREAM, SEEKER LEADER

With no ramp, you are almost guaranteed to be Monarch by turn 3. When Starscream is back on the front side, then card draw will make opponents lose 2 life, similar to the new Sheoldred effect. So then the move seems to be: draw as many cards during that phase to make your opponents lose as much life as possible. Once Monarch is on the battlefield, you probably don't need to find ways to flip Starscream again.

MASSIVE DRAW You want all the black card draw you can fit in. Cards like **Night's Whisper** up through **Ambition's Cost** all feel very playable. But for BIG card draw you want finishers like **Peer into the Abyss**, **Necrologia**, or **Wilis, Broker of Blood** that can draw enough cards to take out a player. And if you're drawing a lot of cards, you might as well double it with **Alhammarret's Archive**.

BE THE MONARCH You really want the monarchy, so making sure you can connect is important. **Custodi Lich** and **Court of Ambition** are good ways to take the monarchy without having to get through in combat. You should already be playing **Dauthi Voidwalker**, but in this deck you might be attacking with it thanks to Shadow to take the monarchy. Plus unblockability effects for your commander or other creatures – like **Shizo**, **Death's Storehouse** or **Access Tunnel** – seem great.

DON'T GET HIT Another great way to keep the monarchy and make it so the cards you draw before combat also drain your opponents is to just not get hit. **No Mercy** is a great incentive not to be attacked, while **Koksun Falls** is a slightly clunkier trick that could also do the job. Then you've got lands like **Maze of Ith** and **Glacial Chasm** that can help out here too.

MIDROLL BREAK

CYCLONUS, THE SABOTEUR // CYCLONUS, CYBERTRONIAN FIGHTER

This feels very clunky. The additional beginning phase is a fun build-around opportunity, but it's very likely happening only every OTHER turn at most, and a flier that connives once on hit isn't very exciting. Overall, the front feels too low-impact and the back feels too difficult to get and maintain.

DOUBLE STRIKE The extra beginning phase is the most interesting thing here, and if you can give Cyclonus double strike, you can get that phase each turn along with a connive (by hitting to convert it, then hitting again to convert it back). There aren't many ways to do this in Dimir, but **Fireshrieker**, **Brass Knuckles**, and **Grappling Hook** can do it.

GET TO 5 POWER You want Cyclonus's front-side power to be 5 as quickly as possible so it can convert to the good side when it hits. **Commander's Plate** can do it and **Hero's Blade** can do it even faster since it can come down early and auto-equip.

UPKEEP/UNTAP PAYOFF Beneficial upkeep triggers are great with extra upkeeps. **Twilight Prophet**, **Keen Duelist**, and **Phyrexian Arena** can fill your hand, then things like **The Scarab God** and **Xanathar, Guild Kingpin** can also take advantage. **Xanathar** is extra fun because you've also gotten to untap all your permanents so you have all your mana. On the untap side, you can get double value from tappers like **Arcanis, the Omnipotent** or **Steel Overseer** (which can also help get your commander to 5 power).

THE LOOT ROUTE You could also choose to focus on the connive ability and build with mechanics like flashback, menace, or go reanimator. But, there are definitely better commanders out there for this effect.

BLITZWING, CRUEL TORMENTOR // BLITZWING, ADAPTIVE ASSAILANT

Wound Reflection is very powerful to have in the command zone. Wanting your opponents to lose life isn't an especially new or groundbreaking strategy, though, so it also feels a bit boring.

ONE-SHOT There are a handful of cards that let you basically kill a player with Blitzwing out by making them lose half their life immediately, then Blitzwing handles the second half. They are: **Shard of the Nightbringer**, **Peer into the Abyss**, **Blood Tribute**, **Fraying Omnipotence**, and **Scourge of the Skyclaves**.

BIG LIFE LOSS You also just want cards that cause big life loss. **Gray Merchant of Asphodel**, **Exsanguinate**, and **Torment of Hailfire** can do that very well.

REDUNDANCY If your deck is built around wound reflection effects, you should probably also run **Wound Reflection**. Other redundant cards include **Warlock Class** and **Archfiend of Despair**.

FLIP IT BACK You REALLY want Blitzwing on its front face by the end of your turn, so you can give it a better chance to get through with fear through **Shizo**, **Death's Storehouse** or unblockability from **Access Tunnel** or **Manifold Key**.

FLAMEWAR, BRASH BETERAN // FLAMEWAR, STREETWISE OPERATIVE

This feels like it goes from good to great the moment you make Flamewar deal BIG damage. Discarding your hand to draw three or four cards is fine. Discarding to draw 7+ is really powerful stuff. You also want to make sure you always have an artifact to sacrifice so you can convert it back and attack for more intel cards.

BIG HITS Menace and deathtouch make Flamewar's backside hard to block, but making it bigger is key. Equipment like **Cranial Plating**, **Blackblade Reforged**, **Nettlecyst**, and **Bonehoard** can do the trick quickly, while **Jeska**, **Thrice Reborn** and **Fiery Emancipation** can triple the damage.

SAC FODDER Treasure are the best expendable artifacts out there these days, so things like **Professional Face-Breaker** and **Grim Hireling** feel good here. Even **Prized Statue** seems like it serves a role here, plus things like **Ichor Wellspring** that are cheap and want to be sacrificed can put in work. **Scrap Trawler** and **Oni-Cult Anvil** are also great ways to have your sac fodder replace itself, one way or another.

RECURSION Between sacrificing artifacts and discarding your hand, there's no shortage of ways to get artifact cards into your graveyard. So cards like **Goblin Welder** or **Daretti**, **Scrap Savant** could be strategies to build around to get back whatever big artifacts you want.

DISCARD SYNERGY Discarding large numbers of cards each turn can be a win-con in itself. **Bone Miser** and **Surly Badgersaur** can give you value, and **Archfiend of Ifnir** can wipe your opponents' boards, while **Containment Construct** can let you play the cards you discard. Beyond that, Madness cards seem very good, like **Call to the Netherworld**, **Big Game Hunter**, etc. And if you're gonna have a full graveyard in red, **Underworld Breach** can give you your big game-winning turn.

SLICER, HIRED MUSCLE // SLICER, HIGH-SPEED ANTAGONIST

The backside of this card – except for the first time you cast it and can maybe attack into an open board to get the front side one turn early – feels like it's just punishment for not being willing to give Slicer away. So ideally, we're building around the front side. The most fun thing here seems to be putting equipment on Slicer that benefits us whenever Slicer attacks, because we still control the equipment.

VALUE EQUIPMENT There are lots of equipment that trigger on attack, and again, we control the equipment so we get the abilities. Cards like **Sword of the Animist** or **Staff of Titania** ramp us every turn, while **Moonsilver Spear** and **Inquisitorial Rosette** give us a board every turn, **Argentum Armor** and **Umezawa's Jitte** can be removal, **Strength-Testing Hammer** and **Mask of Memory** can draw cards, and **Komainu Battle Armor** means you're almost certainly not getting hit. Plus all of the **Swords of X & Y!**

PROTECTION **Darksteel Plate** can make Slicer indestructible, while **Champion's Helm** and **Swiftfoot Boots** can protect it with hexproof. Then **Commander's Plate** protects it with, well, protection. **Whispersilk Cloak** is tricky because of Shroud, but making Slicer unblockable is also a big deal.

EQUIP ENABLERS **Hammer of Nazahn** and **Brass Squire** are helpful for cheating equip costs, and **Kazuul's Toll Collector** is a good backup equipment holder, just without the fun of passing him around.

IMPROVE ATTACKS Since you're guaranteeing your opponents will be attacking each other, boost that with cards like **Death Kiss**, **Frontier Warmonger**, or the all-new **Blast-Furnace Hellkite** which your extra equipment could help you cast.

JESKA IS GOOD **Jeska, Thrice Reborn** is amazing here because her damage-tripling ability is until your next turn, so if you target Slicer, it applies during every combat that turn cycle!

3) **TO THE LISTENERS:**

What do you think of these new Decepticon Commanders from The Brothers' War? Are you planning to build any of them? What synergistic cards for each one do you think we missed?

****CARDKINGDOM.COM/COMMAND** **CALL-OUT #2** **ULTRA PRO #2****

4) CLEAN-UP STEP

Big thanks to our amazing team here at The Command Zone! **Damen Lenz, Arthur Meadowcroft, Ladee Danger, Manson Leung, Craig Blanchette, Josh Murphy, Jake Boss, Patrick Nan, Jordan Pridgen, Sam Waldow, Gaurav Gulati, Jamie Block, Mitch Trafford, and Evan Limberger. Plus three new team members: Gabriel Pozos, Megan Yip and Eric Lem.**