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See You on the Flip Side

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 House of Cards
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PRO TOUR-VALENCIA

Today marks my last weekly House of Cards article. Of course, I never had illusions that my time with MagicTheGathering.com would last forever. But I kind of thought that I would reach the end of the road because:

1) I burned out... fizzle. pop.

Making 3-5 decks every week plus coming up with a weekly article 51 weeks out of the year can be pretty challenging. Add a new baby to the mix (the call from Mark asking me to write for the site came two days after returning home from the birth of my son) and a full-time job (most people don't realize that Anthony, BDM, and I actually only work for Wizards as freelance writers), and you have a really exhausting recipe (can you believe I put three parenthetical statements in one sentence?).

2) It stopped being fun... yay. woo.

Let me tell you, I didn't agree to this job because of the spectacular health insurance. I agreed because of how great it sounded to think about new decks every week, to see sets in advance, to have regular access to the people who make **Magic**, and to contribute to the game I love in really cool ways. In short, I did it because it sounded like a hell of a lot of fun. Was it? You bet your bippy it was. But at some point I figured the luster would wear off and I would realize how much work being a columnist is. Maybe this is just the precursor to burnout, come to think of it.

3) They fired me... seeya. slam.

I mean, really, Jay Moldenhauer-Salazar? Who is this shmuck? It was a tremendous risk for Aaron and Mark to give a weekly column to a guy who had never played much competitive **Magic**. The joke was, I guess, that at every Pro Tour event Aaron or Mark attended, the really good players would whisper that they loved the site but, well, do they realize that the decks from Jay kind of suck and was there any chance of getting a different deck guy? Even though Aaron and Mark continued to encourage me towards creativity in deckbuilding without making excuses for the power of my decks, I expected Aaron to eventually come to his senses.

4) I lost credibility... oops. hello?

As I said, I don't have a competitive **Magic** career to lend me credibility. I only have my wacky deck ideas, almost all of which are first-draft creations with minimal testing behind them. I figured one of these days that I would make one boo-boo too many and people would stop caring what I said.

But you know what? None of these explain me leaving the site as a regular contributor. In fact...

- 1) I still have too many deck ideas floating around in my head.
- 2) I am still having loads of fun.
- 3) I still get positive feedback from Aaron and the other writers.
- 4) I still get loads of positive feedback from you readers.

Instead, I recently realized that I need to write novels. Which is to say, I *need* to write novels. *Birthright*, gave me the confidence that I can actually finish a book-length piece of fiction. *Birthright* also has a ton of flaws, common writing pitfalls that are embarrassing now and which I hope to avoid next time. The writing bug has hit me--hard--and I want to get cracking while I have some momentum. Since my family and job aren't going anywhere, I just don't have time to write both novels and a weekly deckbuilding column. Or if I did I would soon burn out, become grumpy, get fired, or mess up a lot.

Let me be clear: This decision in no way means that I'm leaving **Magic**. I'll still be on **Magic Online**, and I will definitely log into the site every day to read about the game. My identity as a **Magic** player isn't going away.

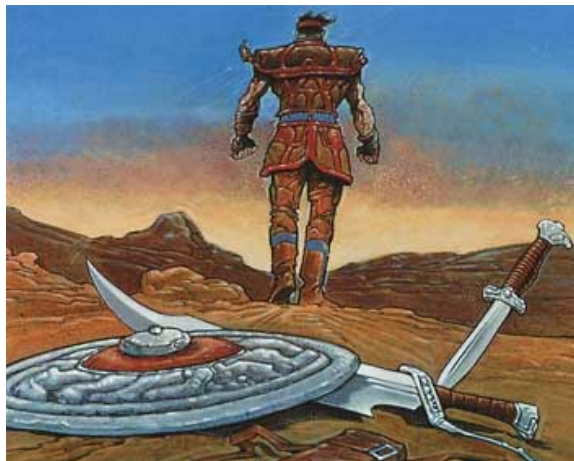


Final Wrap-up
[Top 8 Video Archives](#)



I promise to write the final chapter of my ["Deck For doctorjay"](#) saga once I've had some time to tinker with [Kamahl, Fist of Krosa](#), [Goblin Sharpshooter](#), and [Legions](#). Until then, I'll continue the ["Diary Of doctorjay"](#) series on StarCity Games. I've also let Aaron know that he can call on me any time to contribute an article to this fine site.

Hopefully the result of my decision will be you someday cracking open a **Magic** or **Dungeons & Dragons** novel with my name on it. I've already followed the submission guidelines on the Wizards Publishing site, in fact. Because their process is slow (read: s. l. o. w.), I fully support you posting to the "Novels & Storylines" [Message Boards](#) to bug everyone incessantly about giving me the chance. If you wish me well in my writing career, turn those well-wishes into a letter campaign. Fly banners and rent blimps. Pray. Storm the offices in Renton. Demand a boycott. Hold your breath. I'm pretty eager over here, so help get me started however you see fit.



Jay tosses down his sword and shield and walks away...

Thank you to everyone who tuned in every Thursday to read about "bad" rares, Deck Challenges, lite decks, set previews, theme decks, and unused gems. Thanks especially go to the hundreds of people who wrote me each week with deck ideas, feedback, and a general love of the game. The toughest part about my decision is severing my direct tie to **Magic's** passionate worldwide audience. Whoever shows up next Thursday is awfully lucky.

So it is with great ambivalence that I leave a fun, sure thing to pursue a hopefully-also-fun, unknown other thing.

Waitaminute... what the heck am I DOING!?!?

-j

P.S. Aaron said I'm *still* not allowed to write a House of Cards article without decklists. It seems fitting to show off some of the cool decks you all have sent

me over the past fourteen months. Enjoy!

<h3>Easter Bunny Gone Nutty</h3> <p>Easter Bunny theme deck by Clint Benoit</p>		
<p style="text-align: right;">Main Deck 60 cards</p>		
<p>10 Forest</p> <p>10 Island</p> <hr/> <p>20 lands</p>	<p>4 Vizzerdrix</p> <p>4 Jackalope Herd</p> <hr/> <p>8 creatures</p>	<p>4 Darkwater Egg</p> <p>4 Skycloud Egg</p> <p>4 Sungrass Egg</p> <p>4 Mossfire Egg</p> <p>4 Frantic Search</p> <p>2 Cultural Exchange</p> <p>2 Fact or Fiction</p> <p>4 Rites of Spring</p> <p>4 Nantuko Shrine</p> <hr/> <p>32 other spells</p>
<h3>Verdant Succession</h3> <p>Pre-Judgment Standard deck by Ori Sonnenschein</p>		
<p style="text-align: right;">Main Deck 60 cards</p>		
<p>20 Forest</p> <p>20 lands</p>	<p>4 Llanowar Elves</p> <p>4 Wood Elves</p> <p>4 Diligent Farmhand</p> <p>4 Penubra Bobcat</p> <p>3 Penubra Kavu</p> <p>4 Anurid Scavenger</p> <p>4 Twigwalker</p> <p>4 Gurzigost</p> <p>3 Druid Lyrist</p> <hr/> <p>34 creatures</p>	<p>4 Verdant Succession</p> <p>2 Creeping Mold</p> <hr/> <p>6 other spells</p>
<h3>The Cantrips <i>Lite!</i></h3> <p>Pre-Judgment Standard deck by Arthur Kimes</p>		
<p style="text-align: right;">Main Deck 60 cards</p>		

23 Swamps
4 Cabal Coffers

27 lands

4 Phyrexian Rager
2 Phyrexian Gargantuan
4 Crypt Rats
3 Urborg Skeleton

13 creatures

3 Afflict
3 Recover
4 Last Caress
4 Unhinge
4 Scavenged Weaponry
2 Soul Burn

20 other spells

Infinite Squirrels

Pre-Onslaught Squirrel Deck by Olethros Endless



Main Deck 57 cards

7 Swamp
7 Island
4 Llanowar Wastes
4 Yavimaya Coast
4 Underground River

26 lands

4 Cavern Harpy
4 creatures

4 Counterspell
1 Delusions of Mediocrity
3 Diabolic Intent
4 Fact or Fiction
2 Memory Lapse
4 Nantuko Shrine
2 Phyrexian Altar
3 Phyrexian Arena
2 Soul Burn
2 Wash Out

27 other spells

First at FNM

Pre-Judgment Standard deck by Doug



Main Deck 60 cards

3 Yavimaya Coast
2 City Of Brass
10 Forest
8 Island

23 lands

4 Shifty Doppelganger
4 Birds of Paradise
4 Flametongue Kavu
1 Penumbra Wurm
3 Mahamoti Djinn
1 Gurzigost
4 Mystic Snake
1 Hypnox

22 creatures

4 Counterspell
4 Memory Lapse
3 Persuasion
4 Standstill

15 other spells

Cover Me! *Lite!*

Pre-Judgment Standard deck by David Vest



Main Deck 60 cards

12 Plains
8 Forest

20 lands

4 Crossbow Infantry
4 Heavy Ballista
4 Angelic Page
4 Serra Advocate
4 Llanowar Elves
4 Seeker of Skybreak

24 creatures

4 Reprisal
2 Vengeance
2 Lure
4 Wax/Wane
4 Armadillo Cloak

16 other spells

First at FNM II

Pre-Onslaught Standard deck by Nathaniel Parker



Main Deck 60 cards

28 Island

28 lands

4 Wind Drake
4 Vizzerdrix
4 Phantom Whelp
2 Thought Devourer
3 Wormfang Crab
4 Vigilant Drake
4 Giant Octopus
3 Wonder

0 other spells

3 Wormfang Drake
1 Amugaba

32 creatures

Lost in a Maze of Telekinetic Brokering

Pre-Onslaught Standard deck by Syithe



Main Deck 60 cards

12 Islands
8 Forests

20 lands

4 Cephalid Broker
2 Cephalid Inkshrouder
4 Krosan Restorer
2 Thieving Magpie
2 Warebear

14 creatures

2 Imobilizing Ink
4 Psionic Gift
4 Wild Growth
4 Telekinetic Bonds
2 Boomerang
4 Memory Lapse
2 Syncopate
4 Aether Burst

26 other spells

Worldgorger Type 2

Standard-legal deck by SnorthDesand220



Main Deck 60 cards

11 Swamp
5 Mountain
4 Tainted Peak

20 lands

4 Balthor the Defiled
4 Worldgorger Dragon

8 creatures

4 Mutilate
4 Buried Alive
4 Flaming Gambit
4 Chainer's Edict
4 Shock
4 Chain of Plasma
4 Dark Banishing
4 Smother

32 other spells

Solitary Haven

Standard-legal deck by Simon Gale



Main Deck 60 cards

4 Seaside Haven
8 Island
10 Plains

22 lands

4 Devoted Caretaker
3 Suntail Hawk
2 Soulcatcher
2 Weathered Wayfarer
1 Arcanis the Omnipotent

12 creatures

4 Solitary Confinement
3 Future Sight
4 Deep Analysis
4 Battle Screech
3 Soulcatcher's Aerie
2 Spirit Cairn
2 Mobilization
4 Artificial Evolution

26 other spells

Land Shuffle

Standard-legal deck by Dan Messineo



Main Deck 60 cards

4 Tranquil Thicket
4 Barren Moor
15 Forest
9 Swamp

32 lands

4 Nantuko Cultivator
4 Maro
4 Rowen
4 Terravore

16 creatures

2 Moment's Peace
2 Naturalize
2 Infest
2 Innocent Blood
2 Ghastly Demise
2 Morality Shift

12 other spells

Slide of Darkness

Standard-legal deck by Greenmarlingdude



Main Deck

Main Deck
60 cards

4 City of Brass
4 Secluded Steppe
4 Barren Moor
6 Plains
6 Swamp

24 lands

4 Scion of Darkness
1 Undead Gladiator
1 Teroh's Faithful

6 creatures

4 Astral Slide
3 Buried Alive
4 Zombify
4 Duress
4 Renewed Faith
2 Death Pulse
3 Chainer's Edict
4 Akroma's Blessing
2 Swat

30 other spells

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Editor's Note: Fear not, gentle reader! Yes, we shall miss dear old Jay--miss him greatly--but the show must go on. Tune in next week when the House of Cards will have a new inhabitant, someone who has shown up on this site before. Who? You'll see next week... --Aaron



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