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You might not have known this, but the original card Phelddagrif from *Alliances* is an anagram for **Magic's** creator. Rearrange the letters that make up the name of that goofy purple hippo, and you get:

"Garfield PhD"

There are all kinds of hidden Easter Eggs in **Magic** names. If you can find an insanely spelled old card, chances are that some diabolic genius in the dungeons beneath Wizards headquarters in Renton -- probably the guy who wrote the flavor text to Deep Analysis -- once rubbed his hands together and said "excellent" upon that crazy card's naming. Take Nevinyrral's Disk. Where do you think the creative text guys got a name like Nevinyrral? Simply reverse the letters, and you learn that the Ultimate Reset Button (tm) belongs to writer Larry Niven. What kind of insane Centaur, Druid, or Hierophant plays the *Citanul* Flute? That's right, a *lunatic*.



By calling this column "Phelddagrif", my intention was to open up two ideas: The first one was as an Easter Egg of my own for those of you who knew the origin, the hidden name, that belongs to this fellow:



The second idea was to refer to the dual nature of the names, cards called one thing, secretly another; a fine theme, I think you will agree, given how this card allows you to play.

Fans of my older Feature Articles here on magicthegathering.com probably recognize the idea behind Richard Garfield, Ph.D. This card allows you to play Mental **Magic** (i.e. the best variant in all the


planes of Dominia). Unlike a regular game of Mental **Magic**, Richard Garfield, Ph.D. only lets *you* play according to variant rules. This puts you at a ridiculous advantage. You should not only always win if you can untap with Richard Garfield, Ph.D. in play, but you should bury your opponent under an avalanche of card advantage.

In building your Richard Garfield, Ph.D. deck, there are two things that you have to keep in mind:

1. Choose your cards so that they function well before you get Richard Garfield, Ph.D., but annihilate the opponent once Richard Garfield, Ph.D. is in play.
2. Unlike regular Mental **Magic**, where you play all your lands face-down, and they can all tap for any color of mana, you have to play with a real mana base if you build a Richard Garfield, Ph.D. deck. Because of that, you have to limit yourself to just a few colors, rather than breaking all the colors.

My first idea for a Richard Garfield, Ph.D. is therefore blue/green. It looks an awful lot like an old school Extended Draw-Go deck, but switching out the Disk or Keg for Time of Need. Green is there to find and recurse Richard Garfield, Ph.D.; blue is required, but is also the best color in Mental **Magic**.

Richard Garfield, Ph.D.



Main Deck

60 cards

2 Dust Bowl	_____	4 Accumulated Knowledge
1 Forest	0 creatures	4 Brainstorm
10 Island		4 Counterspell
4 Thawing Glaciers		4 Fact or Fiction
4 Tropical Island		4 Force of Will
4 Wasteland		2 Force Spike
_____		2 Gaea's Blessing
25 lands		3 Intuition
		4 Richard Garfield, Ph.D.
		4 Time of Need


		35 other spells

I'm not sure what formats Unhinged players run in their home games, but I tried to make this deck Type 1.5 legal, because Type 1.5 is our favorite Mental **Magic** format.


This deck can play as a regular Draw-Go deck. Sure, you might give away your plan with a turn two Time of Need, but otherwise, you can just counter your opponent's spells while playing with cool combinations we sharks have missed for the past two years. Intuition + Accumulated Knowledge, meet your predecessors! Intuition + Gaea's Blessing is great, but not as good as Brainstorm + Thawing Glaciers. Never forget: Force of Will cures all ills.

Once Richard Garfield, Ph.D. is in play, you have every answer you need. Is your opponent an Affinity deck? You have six Naturalizes and four Hurkyl's Recalls ready to go. Rebuild and Energy Flux are at your fingertips. You can run Fact or Fiction as March of the Machines and make him pick up whatever is left with Brainstorm or Force Spike as Unsummon or Seal of Removal. Fact or Fiction in general is

your best friend... it puts three blank cards into your hand, flashes back as Deep Analysis, and fills your graveyard with long game breakers like Krosan Reclamation and Alter Reality.

Your deck is jam packed with the best cards in Mental **Magic**: Whispers of the Muse, Divert, Disrupt, Hydroblast, Stifle... and that's just on . If you have to defend yourself, you have access to everything from Wall of Blossoms to Wall of Mulch on defense, and can even flash back Moment's Peace!

Another take at the deck could look like this:

Richard Garfield, Ph.D. 


Main Deck
60 cards

2 Dust Bowl	_____	4 Accumulated Knowledge
1 Forest	0 creatures	4 Brainstorm
10 Island		4 Counterspell
1 Swamp		4 Fact or Fiction
4 Thawing Glaciers		4 Force of Will
3 Tropical Island		2 Force Spike
4 Wasteland		2 Gaea's Blessing
_____		3 Intuition
25 lands		4 Powder Keg
		4 Richard Garfield, Ph.D.

		35 other spells


This version makes a small change: Time of Need for Powder Keg. The de-emphasis on green lets you swap in a basic Swamp. Why would you want to do that, especially with no black cards?

The answer is simple: Kicker. Intuition is awful good at playing Probe, and Probe with Kicker is one of the most feared plays in all of Mental **Magic**.

The addition of a couple of Powder Kegs helps you defend yourself from whatever gets past your counterspells... and helps out your card drawing later in the game. Those  spells can now profitably play Thirst for Knowledge as well, and the Kegs themselves can play Temporal Aperture going long.

And Richard Garfield, Ph.D.?




You can circumvent the Legend rule (not to mention win the game) by using him as the best  creature in the multiverse of **Magic**: Morphling.

Either of the above decks can play with a High Tide feel. You play control magic for several turns and then take control of the game with one tremendous effect. For a High Tide deck, that usually meant generating tremendous mana and forcing the opponent to draw his library; for Richard Garfield, Ph.D., it means changing the field of battle in a fundamentally unfair way.

Another look at this type of deck can go for a stronger green component:


As long as we are muddying the Type 1.5 waters, there is no reason we can't go in this direction:

Richard Garfield, Ph.D. 		
Main Deck 60 cards		
1 Bayou	4 Birds of Paradise	4 Brainstorm
5 Forest	1 Deranged Hermit	4 Force of Will
5 Island	4 Ophidian	2 Gaea's Blessing
1 Savannah	1 Quirion Ranger	4 Land Grant
4 Tropical Island	4 Richard Garfield, Ph.D.	1 Mana Leak
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16 lands	1 Squee, Goblin Nabob	4 Survival of the Fittest
	4 Tradewind Rider	<hr/>
	2 Uktabi Orangutan	19 other spells
	4 Wall of Roots	
<hr/>		
	25 creatures	

This deck is based loosely on Billy Jensen's deck William "Baby Huey" Jensen, NY Masters '00 that won the first Masters. Survival of the Fittest is ridiculous in this kind of a deck, and the singletons work amazingly well in conjunction with that card.

I had to switch out some Impulses for Gaea's Blessings, as recursion becomes deceptively important long game. While Jensen played for Tradewind Rider, you just want infinite card advantage and total control... No reason to skimp on the turns.

Tradewind Rider, again, can play Fact or Fiction, or go straight for Deep Analysis after being used with Survival of the Fittest. The increased concentration of Ophidians works in much the same way that Intuition did in the previous decks, but this time, Birds of Paradise (along with Land Grant) can supply the black.

Survival of the Fittest -- not surprisingly -- is next to unbeatable in this deck. A card that is banned in Mental **Magic** can not only fetch -- but pitch -- Deranged Hermit in this deck.  is one of my favorite mana costs. It can come down as Plow Under or Stunted Growth and then claw its way back up as Grizzly Fate. Similarly, Uktabi Orangutan can play Thornscape Battlemage and finish as Call of the Herd. With Survival of the Fittest, the possibilities are endless.

So you have a couple of ideas for Richard Garfield, Ph.D. The number of decks you can come up with yourself number with the possibilities of all **Magic** cards, of all five colors. You can go red and break Death Spark and land destruction, or play a classic U/W control deck that goes long with Teferi's

Honor Guard, Abeyance, and even Balancing Act. For a basic list of the kinds of mana costs that work really well in Mental **Magic**, check out Mental Magic: The Beginning, or other articles in the Mental **Magic** series. Like many *Unhinged* cards, this one obviously has a lot going on rules-wise, so make sure to catch the *Unhinged* FAQ which will be going up on **magicthegathering.com** next week for any specific questions you may have.

Don't forget you can even use Richard Garfield, Ph.D. to play Questing Phelddagrif as Phelddagrif version 1.0. That you just broke the Legend Rule (in spirit, if not by letter) not just one way, but two, will be our little secret.

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