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Thursday, December 02, 2004

Happy Thanksgiving, everyone! In the spirit of the holiday, I thought I'd...
Huh?

That was last week? What happened? OK, no prob, it's Throwback Week. I can deal with that. I'm going to reminisce back to the days of old and dredge up some memories from as far back as I can remember. It was November 25, 2004, and the Thanksgiving bells were ringing...

Still no?

Fine, no Thanksgiving stories this year. Since I'm a vegetarian, you can imagine how many stories I have from National Meat-Eating Day anyway. So instead, I'll dredge up some memories from even farther ago than that. It was November 20, 2004, and I was playing in the *Unhinged* release event at Dreamland Hobbies in Las Vegas. It was fun times to be sure. I learned that I'm very bad at playing Six-y Beast (which surprised me because I'm usually pretty good at those kinds of mind games), I'm decidedly mediocre at playing Orcish Paratroopers, and I'm quite good at playing Question Elemental. Or am I? Hey, why would I even bring it up unless I was an expert? Is it typical of me to highlight my *flaws*? Um, can you help me stop asking questions?

I want to give a big thanks to the card shop for the warm welcome they extended me while I was on unfamiliar turf. Great people, great environment. I'd also like to give a nod to 12-year-old Kevin Lee, who stomped me into the ground in Round 3. It wasn't even close. I won my other three rounds, though, so I had a successful afternoon. In fact, the only other game I lost was when Ulysses played Farewell to Arms against me and made me put my left hand behind my back... the turn before he played a second Farewell to Arms and made me put my right hand behind my back. That was a problem. It was very early in the game (turn 4 or 5) and my hand was pretty full. I couldn't afford to lose all those cards, so I did the only thing I could think of: I played with my face. Untap cards with my nose, draw cards with my mouth. After managing to drag a card from the top of my deck over to where the rest of my hand was sitting face-down on the table, I realized the new card didn't do me much good and that I had just dug myself into an even deeper hole than if I had simply given up immediately and pitched my hand. I had to turn my entire hand face-up so I could see what the cards were. I managed to go three turns playing with my face before I inadvertently knocked most of the cards in my "hand" onto the floor, where I'd never get them back. By that point, I was "holding" a Saute while I only had one Mountain in play as well as a Double-Header while Ulysses had nothing bounceable, so I finally gave in and reclaimed my hands.



When I tell that story, most people ask why I didn't recruit someone else to act as my hands. It never occurred to me. Going face-first was such a natural solution that I didn't look for alternate answers.

Why am I telling *Unhinged* stories on Throwback Week? To lead into my Throwback Week topic: Old Fogey and Blast from the Past. These were two of the three *Unhinged* cards I designed. (The third was Laughing Hyena, a late entry to the set that I devised after playtesting started and which, in my wholly biased opinion, completed the set for Limited play.) My grubby fingerprints are all over the *Unhinged* set in other ways; I wrote many names and much flavor text. But this week is spent in the distant past, and that's where these two cards stubbornly reside.

"Get Off the Lawn!"

Oooh, design stories. I never get to tell those. Old Fogey got its start as a card you may have heard of: Akroma, Angel of Wrath. I call Old Fogey the anti-Akroma, but it's really her shadowy other half. Back when *Legions* was being put together, Akroma was conceived as a crazy creature loaded up with as many keywords as possible. It got all the usual suspects, but certain pranksters (and I'm looking in Bill Rose's direction) wouldn't stop there. More and more keywords kept showing up in the file: Flanking. Banding. Echo? It was a joke, and they were removed, but that's where this monstrosity came from. What if a creature got all the *other* keywords? All the ones that didn't get onto Akroma? The bad ones. The obsolete ones. Load 'em up! I believe Old Fogey was printed exactly as I submitted it, including the name, cost, size, and creature type.



Mark Rosewater enjoys this card because it's a ready-made reply to those people who ask why we don't bring back certain keywords. Play with this thing. Confused yet? If not, you're probably playing it wrong. When the original version of the *Unhinged* FAQ included incorrect instructions on how fading, echo, phasing, and cumulative upkeep interacted, I pointed out the error and corrected it to Mark. Except my correction was *also wrong*, and it actually worked in a third, different way. At the *Unhinged* release event I attended, one person was very excited about the "bands with other Dinosaurs" ability because it could band with Mistform Ultimius. No it can't. It can't band with Pygmy Allosaurus either. A creature with "bands with other Dinosaurs" can't band with Dinosaurs—it can band with other creatures that have "bands with other Dinosaurs" (regardless of their creature type). Of course, there's only one creature it can band with: itself. (And, yes, creatures that have banding in their own right, but it's not as if Old Fogey has anything to do with that.)


While I was working on Old Fogey, I tried to come up with a name. Blast from the Past seemed like a great name, but it unfortunately sounded too much like a spell. So I had to come up with a spell now, too! Once I had the concept, it pretty much wrote itself—except that when I submitted it, the cost of each ability was a different color. Kicker was 🍄 for a Squirrel token, buyback was 🍄, etc. It got reddified in development.

So what can we do with these cards? Old Fogey is an anti-combo with itself, as phasing and echo interact horribly. Spatial Binding would solve that problem. Giving it some sort of Lure ability could be devastating in combat; its 7/7 size plus flanking plus rampage would wipe out just about anything and everything that blocked it. Manipulating

Unimportant Update!

Let's throwback even farther! *Champions of Kamigawa* has altered an entire *Legends* keyword ability! Except not really. You see, *Legends* (the set) included a cycle of non-mana-producing lands that gave certain *Legends* (the creatures) the painfully awful ability "bands with other *Legends* (the meaningless placeholder word)." Creatures with "bands with other *Legends*" can band with other creatures with "bands with other *Legends*," but can't necessarily band with *Legends*. If they all said "bands with other

counters would be good—it wants fewer age counters and more fade counters. (I think that's the slogan of my moisturizer.) Like any creature with phasing, its phased-out turns are excellent times to Wrath. Turning all creatures in play into Homarids or turning a land into a snow-covered Plains would make it unblockable, and thus lethal in 3 turns. Unfortunately, I don't have a deck for it. Do you?

Blast from the Past already combos with itself: cycling and madness are bestest pals. If you had some sort of repetitive discard effect, such as a Masticore's upkeep,  would let you Shock something without incurring card disadvantage. (That's madness and buyback.) On that same train of thought, it can be Solitary Confinement's upkeep payment *and* victory condition all in one.

Ooflotaks," the ability would work exactly the same. As the resident expert on the "bands with other" ability, I feel it's my duty to inform the **Magic** public of an update! "Legend" is no longer a creature type, so these cards all got errata. Seafarer's Quay now reads as follows: Blue legendary creatures you control have "bands with other legendary creatures." Yes, "bands with other Legends" became "bands with other legendary creatures" even though the old ability didn't correlate to the subtype and the new ability doesn't correlate to the supertype. Huzzah! May I suggest "bands with other Ooflotaks" once again?

Back with Another One of Those Past-Blastin' Beats

Main Deck 60 cards

2 Battlefield Forge	1 Razormane Masticore	4 Blast from the Past
4 Coastal Tower	2 Squee, Goblin Nabob	1 Ceta Sanctuary
6 Island	3 Thought Courier	2 Darksteel Ingot
8 Mountain	_____	2 Deja vu
4 Shivan Reef	6 creatures	3 Gamble
_____		2 Helm of Awakening
24 lands		4 Obsessive Search
		4 Solitary Confinement
		4 Talisman of Progress
		4 Wild Research

		30 other spells

Outside the Timestream

The next section is going to tie back into everything I've written so far. It'll all sync up nicely. It's too bad, then, that this section has nothing to do with anything. It's just a neat *Unhinged* deck I wanted to write about. Mark Rosewater built something similar for the release event, I believe.

Benjamin Denard sent me a deck that combined the power of My First Tome, Name Dropping, and lots of cards that all have the same word in their name. Well, I think it did: the decklist didn't actually contain Name Dropping, and the deck description never specifically mentioned it. But what else could the Forests have been for? Ben chose to load his deck with "Akki." I went a step farther and built a deck around the word "Goblin." Original, I know. The genius here is that when you activate My First Tome and read off a choice piece of flavor text such as "AIIEEEEE! —Ib Halfheart, Goblin Tactician," your opponent can either guess "Goblin Ski Patrol" and let you "gotcha" back every "Goblin" card in your graveyard thanks to Name Dropping, or he can keep his mouth shut and let you draw just one

card. The problem is that if your opponent is merely slightly smarter than the Goblins in your deck, he'll just write down "Goblin Ski Patrol" on a piece of paper, correctly guessing it and giving you nothing. The point is probably moot—the most likely outcome is that your opponent lacks encyclopedic knowledge of *Ice Age* flavor text and simply shrugs.

But although My First Tome doesn't require speaking (just guessing), Loose Lips does require speaking. I suggest the sentence "Name my hot goblin with the snow-covered lips." (You'll see why.) The last piece of the puzzle is Urza's Hot Tub, which transforms any "Goblin" card into any other "Goblin" card such as Goblin Grenade, or even Goblin Burrows if you're short on land. I included snow-covered lands not just to help out the Ski Patrol but so the Hot Tub can fix your mana. Any basic land in the deck can become any other basic land because they all share the word "snow-covered"! It's taken a decade, but this may be the best use for snow-covered lands yet.



Don't Say Goblin



Main Deck

60 cards

2 Goblin Burrows
 1 Karplusan Forest
 3 Snow-Covered Forest
 3 Snow-Covered Island
 14 Snow-Covered Mountain
 1 Tropical Island

24 lands

1 Goblin Brigand
 1 Goblin Chariot
 1 Goblin Gardener
 1 Goblin Goon
 1 Goblin King
 1 Goblin Lookout
 1 Goblin Matron
 1 Goblin Patrol
 1 Goblin Piledriver
 1 Goblin Raider
 1 Goblin Replica
 1 Goblin Ski Patrol
 1 Goblin Sledder
 1 Goblin Soothsayer
 1 Goblin Spelunkers
 1 Goblin Taskmaster
 1 Goblin Warchief

17 creatures

1 Goblin Cavaliers
 4 Goblin Grenade
 1 Goblin Lore
 1 Goblin Piker
 1 Goblin Shrine
 3 Loose Lips
 2 My First Tome
 3 Name Dropping
 3 Urza's Hot Tub

19 other spells

The Clocks Are Melting

Then there are the pair of decks sent in by Matt Ginsberg. How badly do you want to win a game? Really, how badly? Do you want to win so much that you're willing to pay any price? Is winning so important to you that you're willing to lose a game to do it? Despite how much sense that doesn't make, those are the lengths to which Matt is willing to go.

Besides me, Douglas S(c)huler, and the old card frame, there's one more thing that Blast from the Past and Old Fogey (and even, perhaps, Throwback Week) have in common: the Time Machine. (I'm not going to get into my rant about the theories of time travel today, though it's very tempting; maybe some other time.) Matt has one of the most bizarre uses for Time Machine I could possibly imagine. No, scratch that—I couldn't ever possibly imagine it. In a mind-bending temporal paradox worthy of the cheesiest sci-fi, the creature—the *only* creature—Matt wants to send through the Time Machine is... *an animated Timesifter*. He's sending a time machine into the future with a different time machine!!! *Someone stop him!!!!*



The key to Matt's eventual victory, aside from that whole tearing-the-universe-apart thing, is that he switches decks between Game 1 and Game 2. His Game 1 deck, called "Double Time," has one purpose: to animate a Timesifter and send it to the future. After it accomplishes that goal, it happily sits back and gets pummeled (it's very unlikely that it can pull off a win), confident that the fate of the future has been assured. We've seen this in sci-fi too: People will happily sacrifice themselves to load up the time machine, knowing that once the timeline is altered, the existence in which they've sacrificed themselves won't actually have happened. Except that in those cases, the time travelers are always going to the past. Oops.

Double Time



Main Deck

60 cards

13 Forest

9 Island

22 lands

4 Birds of Paradise

4 Sakura-Tribe Elder

8 creatures

4 Animate Artifact

4 Brainstorm

4 Kodama's Reach

4 March of the Machines

3 Sensei's Divining Top

3 Sylvan Library

4 Time Machine

4 Timesifter

30 other spells

All that deck does is accelerate your mana and find your combo pieces. After you send off the Timesifter and lose, you switch over to the "Time After Time" deck, which is even worse than the "Double Time" deck. It's *less* likely that the Game 2 deck could ever possibly win a game. Every single card in the deck has the same mana cost: 0. That's right: *zero*. There are some man-lands in there, but it has no real hope on its own... until a savior from the past comes screaming in at 88 miles per hour.

Time After Time



Main Deck

60 cards

4 Blinkmoth Nexus	4 Ornithopter	4 Urza's Bauble
3 Desert	4 Phyrexian Walker	4 other spells
4 Faerie Conclave	4 Shield Sphere	
4 Forbidding Watchtower		
4 Ghitu Encampment	12 creatures	
4 Glacial Chasm		
1 Library of Alexandria		
4 Maze of Ith		
4 Mishra's Factory		
3 Quicksand		
4 Spawning Pool		
1 Strip Mine		
4 Treetop Village		
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44 lands		

The idea with this deck is to aggressively mulligan until you find Glacial Chasm. You *must* find Glacial Chasm. Once you do, your only job is to not lose the game (and play the Chasm; I guess you have two jobs) before turn 5. You'll lose some life to cumulative upkeep, but then the Timesifter pops into play from Game 1 and you'll never get another turn for the rest of the game. You can't possibly win the Timesifter battle, so your opponent will take all the rest of the turns. You no longer care about cumulative upkeep because you have no upkeep step. You don't care about skipping your combat step because you have no turns. And you can't be damaged for the rest of the game. Unless your opponent has a single land-destruction or artifact-destruction spell anywhere in his entire deck (and who plays *those?*), you sit back humming a happy tune while your opponent decks himself one card at a time.

It's always nice to find people more insane than I am. It gives me something to strive for.

Until next week, have fun with time travel.

Mark

