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Magic Dossier: Monty Ashley

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Name: Monty Ashley

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Job title and duties: I'm Online Media's Managing Editor for **Magic: the Gathering**, which means I'm roughly in charge of what **Magic** looks like on the Wizards of the Coast website. There are people who work on specific aspects of the site; for example, Scott Johns is the content manager of **magicthegathering.com**, but I'm his boss.

Age: 34

Education: I went to the beautiful University of California at San Diego, majoring in Literature. You'd be surprised how much that comes up in my day-to-day life. On second thought, no, you probably wouldn't.

Began working at Wizards: 1997

Previous job: Well, before my current gig at Wizards, I was editor of *Sideboard Magazine*, and before that I worked in the Organized Play Data Department on the gargantuan tournament database. In the distant past, I've worked in Microsoft Technical Support, delivered pizzas, baked pies, and managed a movie theater in San Diego.

How you got your job here: Sheer stick-to-itiveness, which [is too a word](#). Basically, I worked as a temp, taking all sorts of little jobs (including working security at Worlds 96 and spending an entire week sorting Ice Age commons) until I got assigned a task with the Arena team that I was able to turn into a long-term job. And after doing it for six months, I got hired on full-time.

Magic accomplishments prior to working here: Well, not many. I've been playing **Magic** since 1994 -- I was at the San Diego Comic Convention when somebody showed some decks he had bought the previous week at Gen Con. I played pretty regularly from then on, but I never played in a sanctioned tournament. I do have a pretty low DCI number, but to be honest, that's mostly because I had access to the database in 1997 and could find out which numbers hadn't been taken.

Expansions or projects you've worked on: I used to be on the flavor text team, but the last expansion I did that for was *Invasion* (which has 18 cards with my flavor text on them). I've done some playtesting on and off since *Urza's Legacy* and I claim to be responsible for something like ten cards being stricken from various sets. Luckily for me, hard data is not kept on that sort of thing, so nobody can say with confidence that it's not true. I also pop up on some other Wizards of the Coast products, such as the **Simpsons TCG** (I helped think of quotes from the show) and the **WCW Nitro TCG** (the team needed someone who knew the difference between an Atomic Drop and a Backbreaker, so I got to pick out a lot of the images on the cards).

Thing you've worked on that you're most proud of: My favorite thing was the cover of *Sideboard #48* cover *Sideboard #48*, which commemorated the tenth anniversary of **Magic** with a **Black Lotus** mosaic made up of hundreds of other **Magic** cards. The magazine's art director (Matt Stevens) liked the idea and I ended up getting the required software and building the cover myself. Also, the recent microsite for *Champions of Kamigawa* (featuring background stories for some of the Legends) worked out pretty well. Speaking of which, have you seen the new [Betrayers of Kamigawa](#) page?

Other games you currently enjoy playing: [Risk 2210](#) and [Betrayal at House on the Hill](#) are the games I've been playing most recently, and I just finished playing *Knights of the Old Republic 2* for the second time. I also harbor a fondness for old text adventures, so every few years, I go back and play through a bunch of Infocom games -- I've done this for long enough that I can still get through the Zork I maze from memory. And I'm always prepared to play old favorites like *Illuminati* or *Family Business*.

Favorite Magic card(s): I'm a big fan of **Bullwhip** from *Stronghold*. There were a lot of one-toughness creatures in the Rath cycle, and since so many of them were unblockable, it was always nice to have a way to take them out that got around Protection from a color. Plus, it had a special bonus ability that you could use to provoke creatures into dying. It wasn't one of the big flashy cards, but I was always happy to draft it. For constructed, I think **Fluctuator** is an almost perfect combo piece -- not only does it fill your graveyard, it fills your hand with non-cycling cards like, say, **Lotus Petals**, **Dark Rituals**, and **Living Death** or **Haunting Misery**. Sure, that's not as good now that Petals and Rituals are banned (and technically, it wasn't all that great even at the time, since **Time Spiral**, **Tolarian Academy**, and **Memory Jar** were running loose), but I like a "combo" that only requires one card.

Also, I think the art for **Silhouette** is hilarious.

In your spare time: I maintain my own website ([Montykins](#), which is mostly just a place for me to talk about non-**Magic** topics) as well as writing for [TeeVee](#) and I've done a few things for [Television Without Pity](#). I also have a movie blog called, cleverly enough, [Monty on Movies](#). And then sometimes I'll do things that don't involve computers at all.

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