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# He Builds With Guilds

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House of Cards  
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PRO TOUR-VALENCIA

Crazy times here at MTG.com! Somewhere, someone decided to cut Vorthos loose in the House of Cards. What will he do? Decklists and combos are not his cup of tea. Even Vorthos knows that there is no point in crying sour grapes. When life hands you lemons, you make lemon meringue pie! And everybody knows, anytime is a great time for pie.

One thing that Vorthos does not set aside when cooking up decks is his steadfast belief that **Magic** is supposed to be fun even beyond the interactions of the cards. So he has constructed some decks that are best piloted with a little 'tude - attitude that is reflected in the cards themselves. Since we're now about half way through the winding byways of Ravnica, Vorthos has chosen to deliver an interesting twist on some guild decks.

The driving question that these decks ask is, "What cards from **Magic's** history would fit in color, flavor, and attitude into Ravnica guild decks?" As it turns out, there are bunches that not only fit in, but really kick the themes up a notch. Let's dive in.

*"This palace will be our fire-spit, and roasted prince our victory meal. Send in the torch-pigs!"*  
—Ghut Rak, Gruul guildmage



## The Torch Pigs

(The Gruul don't care about format legality)

**Main Deck**  
60 cards

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Skarrg, the Rage Pits</li> <li>1 Gruul Turf</li> <li>2 Wasteland</li> <li>1 Ravaged Highlands</li> <li>1 Timberland Ruins</li> <li>7 Forest</li> <li>9 Mountain</li> </ul> <hr/> <p>22 lands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 Gruul Guildmage</li> <li>1 Borborygmos</li> <li>2 Vulshok War Boar</li> <li>2 Coalhauler Swine</li> <li>2 Giant Warthog</li> <li>3 War-Torch Goblin</li> <li>3 Keldon Arsonist</li> <li>2 Ogre Arsonist</li> <li>2 Skarrgan Pit-Skulk</li> </ul> <hr/> <p>21 creatures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Livonya Silone</li> <li>1 Torch Song</li> <li>4 Kaervek's Torch</li> <li>1 Ruination</li> <li>4 Gruul Signet</li> <li>2 Gruul War Plow</li> <li>1 Feast of Worms</li> <li>1 Wreak Havoc</li> <li>2 Frenzied Tilling</li> </ul> <hr/> <p>17 other spells</p>
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From the burning pits, ruins, and wastes, the Torch Pigs roll in to crush fancy palaces and to make barbecue out of their high-falootin' inhabitants. So what does this mean in the game? It means boars, burn, and smashing non-basic lands (with bonus punishment for legendary lands). When you play a Gruul deck like The Torch Pigs, you must play it with a chip on your shoulder. Should your opponent be so haughty as to play a **Watery Grave** or a **Godless Shrine**, you burst out in a guttural roar "You will fry in the flames of your 20-dollar land!" Then you take that palace down with one of your many sub \$2 anti-palace cards. Oh yeah, then you **torch** away his snooty blockers and roll in with your **pigs**.

Many of these cards are obvious in their connection to the deck's theme - the "torch" cards and all the various swine cards. **Borborygmos** might seem obvious, but he's actually in there based on the wonderful synergy (ooh, look at the deckbuilder lingo) with his flavor text (doh, Matt spoils deckbuilder lingo).

*"It's easy to see why those Gruul dirtbags follow him—the only orders he gives are 'Crush them!' and 'We eat!'"*  
—Teysa

It is fitting, in this deck whose theme is to cook the king and eat him, that **Borborygmos's** commands would be "Crush them!" and "We eat!" A perfect fit. Arsonists are right at home, and all the land destruction is right in line with the deck theme and the deck flavor ("Feast" of Worms - another example of smashing and eating.) Of course, the guildmage who orders in the Torch Pigs should be in the deck. But **Livonya Silone**? What's her deal? Well, she has the Gruul colors and this nifty thing called "Legendary landwalk." If your opponent happens to slap down an **Eiganjo Castle**, Livonya will skate by the castle defenses to kick the king straight in the gut. How very Torch Pig of her.

If you have your own ideas for rounding out this stomp and chomp deck, have at it. If roasted prince is not your idea of fine fare, consider the wonders of the donut. Mmmmm, donuts.



"It's the Cops!" is a Boros deck that focuses on the League of Wojek, the arm of the guild that is charged with enforcing the law in Ravnica. Yup, the Wojek are the cops of the city-plane. This deck is less about the intent of the guild or the attitude with which it should be played. It's more about what you should be saying when playing it. Let's take a look at the deck first.



It's The Cops!		
<b>Main Deck</b> 60 cards		
3 Boros Garrison	1 Agrus Kos, Wojek Veteran	1 Unquestioned Authority
2 Sunhome, Fortress of the Legion	3 Wojek Embermage	4 Arrest
10 Plains	3 Wojek Apothecary	2 Shackles
9 Mountain	4 Patrol Hound	2 Wojek Siren
24 lands	3 Border Patrol	1 Rule of Law
	4 Defender of Law	1 Circle of Protection: Blue
	2 Prison Barricade	1 Circle of Protection: Black
	20 creatures	1 Circle of Protection: Green
		3 Chastise
		16 other spells

In order to play this deck, one must first be sure to brush up on all the popular Police jargon and Police movie quotes. Here's how you play It's the Cops:

Whenever you play a Wojek creature card (**Border Patrol**, or **Defender of Law**), you must say something like, "Officers are on the scene." ("K9 on the scene" for **Patrol Hound**.) If you play **Defender of Law** as an instant to block, "Backup is on the way" is appropriate. Slap an **Arrest** on a creature and bark out, "Book 'em, Kos!" or "Hands above your head, dirtbag!" Clap the Shackles on and bellow "Cuff 'em!" Bust a **Chastise** and say this in your best Cartman voice, "Maybe this will teach you to listen to authoritaugh!" These are interchangeable with, "You have the right to remain silent..." and "please step out of the car, ma'am," or "Go ahead, make my day," and any of a slew of other humiliating authoritative commands. It should really be a good time for you, and your opponent will love it too - everybody loves to be accosted by the police.

So the "Badge" is not enough of a power trip for you. Try the "cloth" and the "offer you can't refuse." The Orzhov concoct a devious blend of religion and organized crime that really puts the little man in his place. Bow Down is a deck that oppresses the opponent while you sit and enjoy the spoils as your lackeys collect the daily tithes and protection money. (This is not a deck you should play against folks you'd like to play with in the future. It may make you enemies.)

Bow Down!		
<b>Main Deck</b> 60 cards		
4 Godless Shrine	1 Teysa, Orzhov Scion	3 Aurification
2 Orzhova, the Church of Deals	2 Orzhov Pontiff	2 Humble
2 Orzhov Basilica	4 Agent of Masks	2 Humility
9 Plains	4 Sleeper Agent	2 Pariah
7 Swamp	2 Spelltithe Enforcer	2 Tithe
24 lands	13 creatures	2 Tariff
		4 Afterlife
		2 Pillory of the Sleepless
		2 Syphon Soul
		1 Guilty Conscience
		1 Greed
		23 other spells

This deck may not be finely tuned, but it packs some really appropriately dastardly cards. In order to maintain the appearance of holiness, this deck allows you to soak away the opponent's life without attacking them. Allow your

agents ([Agent of Masks](#) and [Sleeper Agent](#)), to slowly wring the life from the opponent while you turn their attackers to gold with [Aurification](#). A way to turn enemies into money is a concept completely Orzhov – and it will keep your [Sleeper Agents](#) from turning State's Witness on you! [Pillory of the Sleepless](#), [Syphon Soul](#), and the Church of Deals will help wring the life out of the opponent. [Humble](#), [Humility](#), [Pariah](#), and [Guilty Conscience](#) are there to make sure the masses know their place – in the dirt bowing and scraping to you! [Greed](#), [Tithe](#), and [Tariff](#) help line your coffers. Put them all together and it's another day of laughing all the way to the bank for you, and another long, long day of humiliating drudgery for the opponent. Good times for all.



Well, I hope there are a few peeps out there who enjoyed this little foray into Tasty-But-Clunky deck land. I can't say you'll win any games with these piles, but I can say that a quick read through the decklists does give you a pretty good feel for how pre-*Ravnica* cards could add spice to the themes of the guilds. It was a hoot to dig through the dusty old vaults for cards that fit into these three decks. I suggest you take a spin through the old binders and create guild decks of your own. Take a whack at building a deck of Selesnya cards that try to [Brainwash](#) and [recruit](#) your enemy's forces. There is bound to be a sick Golgari Cycle of Life and Death deck out there. Or, for a more difficult challenge, build an Izzet deck wherein the cards, lined up alphabetically, also have ascending collector numbers and converted mana costs. By the time you're done with that bean-twister, your regular host will be back in the driver's seat and your decklists will no longer require any prior knowledge of flavor text, cannibalistic cuisine, or lines from corny Cop movies. When Chris gets back, you tell him you don't want any more of this funny business, and that you're not going to fall for a banana in the tailpipe.

*Matt Cavotta has always been a fantasy goober. At various points in his gooberhood, he has used his nerdy knowledge to become a professional goober. He went from scribbling pictures of his own **D&D** characters to illustrating books and cards for his two favorite games; **D&D** and **Magic**. Then he channeled his inner 7th level Illusionist/3rd level Bard and landed himself a job at Wizards as a writer. He continues to cast his illusion spells each morning, lest they find out he's just another goober.*



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