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# Hostile Intentions (Part 3 of 3)

Ben Bleiweiss  
*Building on a Budget*  
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hello everyone, and welcome to the last Building on a Budget column of this year. It's only fitting that this column wraps up one of the most popular series that we've done together this year—the Deckbuilding challenge, in which I give you a list of cards with ticket values, and you give me a deck back that totals 30 tickets or less! The most recent contest was centered around *Hostility*, and here was the winning decklist:

### Rallius Hostility 1 dec

**Main Deck**  
60 cards

3 Forest	4 Ashling the Pilgrim	4 Beacon of Destruction
4 Fungal Reaches	3 Hostility	4 Braid of Fire
4 Ghitu Encampment		4 Incinerate
9 Mountain	7 creatures	4 Lash Out
3 Terramorphic Expanse		3 Molten Disaster
		4 Rites of Flourishing
23 lands		2 Squall Line
		2 Sudden Impact
		3 Sudden Shock
		30 other spells



And here was the pool of cards from which Rallius built his deck.

Blue	Green	Red	Red (cont.)	Artifact
Æthersnipe (0.1)	Birds of Paradise (5)	Arc Blade (0.1)	Incendiary Command (0.5)	Coalition Relic (5)
Air Elemental (0.1)	Briarhorn (0.1)	Ashling the Pilgrim (0.5)	Incinerate (0.25)	Coat of Arms (2.5)
Brine Elemental (0.1)	Changeling Titan (0.25)	Beacon of Destruction (0.5)	Inner-Flame Acolyte (0.1)	Coldsteel Heart (2)
Cancel (0.25)	Civic Wayfinder (0.1)	Blaze (0.1)	Inner-Flame Igniter (0.1)	Deathrender (1)
Careful Consideration (0.25)	Cloudthresher (1)	Bogardan Firefiend (0.1)	Lash Out (0.25)	Gauntlet of Power (1)
Cloud Elemental (0.1)	Commune with Nature (0.1)	Bogardan Rager (0.1)	Lava Axe (0.1)	Howling Mine (2.5)
Delay (0.33)	Edge of Autumn (0.1)	Braid of Fire (0.5)	Lavacore Elemental (0.1)	Lotus Bloom (2.5)
Familiar's Ruse (0.25)	Fertile Ground (0.1)	Browbeat (2)	Lightning Elemental (0.1)	Loxodon Warhammer (2)
Fathom Trawl (0.5)	Force of Savagery (0.33)	Caterwauling Boggart (0.1)	Lightning Serpent (0.5)	Mind Stone (0.5)
Fog Elemental (0.1)	Gaea's Anthem (2)	Ceaseless Searblades (0.1)	Lightning Storm (0.1)	Mirari (1)
Foresee (0.1)	Gemhide Sliver (0.25)	Chandra Nalaar (3)	Molten Disaster (4)	Prismatic Lens (0.25)
Guile (2)	Groundbreaker (1.5)	Changeling Berserker (0.1)	Nova Chaser (1)	Springleaf Drum (0.1)
Looter <i>ii</i> -Kor (0.1)	Harmonize (1)	Char-Rumbler (0.1)	Orcish Cannonade (0.1)	Wanderer's Twig (0.1)
Merfolk Looter (0.1)	Hurricane (0.33)	Coal Stoker (0.1)	Pyromancer's Swath (0.33)	



Mistform Ultimus (0.25)	Joiner Adept (0.5)	Cone of Flame (0.1)	Reiterate (0.33)	
Mulldrifter (0.1)	Krosan Grip (0.25)	Conflagrate (0.1)	Rift Bolt (0.25)	<b>Land</b>
Ponder (0.1)	Llanowar Elves (0.5)	Demolish (0.1)	Rift Elemental (0.1)	Arena (0.33)
Psionic Blast (4)	Might of Old Krosa (0.25)	Disintegrate (0.33)	Rite of Flame (1)	Forest (FREE)
Rune Snag (1)	Naturalize (0.1)	Earth Elemental (0.1)	Shock (0.1)	Fungal Reaches (0.1)
Sage of Epityr (0.1)	Quirion Dryad (3)	Faultgrinder (0.1)	Skizzik Surger (0.1)	Ghitu Encampment (0.25)
Sage Owl (0.1)	Rampant Growth (0.1)	Fiery Temper (0.5)	Smokebraider (0.1)	Grove of the Burnwillows (4)
Shapesharer (0.33)	Recollect (0.1)	Fire-Belly Changeling (0.1)	Soulblast (0.33)	Highland Weald (1)
Spellweaver Volute (0.33)	Rites of Flourishing (0.5)	Flamecore Elemental (0.1)	Soulbright Flamekin (0.1)	Island (FREE)
Telling Time (0.25)	Scryb Ranger (0.25)	Flamekin Bladewhirl (0.5)	Spark Elemental (0.25)	Karplusan Forest (4)
Think Twice (0.1)	Seal of Primordium (0.1)	Flamekin Brawler (0.1)	Sparkspitter (0.25)	Keldon Megaliths (0.25)
Tidings (0.25)	Search for Tomorrow (0.1)	Flamekin Harbinger (0.25)	Storm Entity (0.1)	Mountain (FREE)
Time Stretch (0.5)	Seedborn Muse (1)	Flamekin Spitfire (0.1)	Subterranean Shambler (0.1)	Shimmering Grotto (0.1)
Twincast (2)	Spectral Force (1)	Furnace of Rath (0.5)	Sudden Impact (0.25)	Shivan Reef (5)
Vesuvan Shapeshifter (3)	Squall Line (0.33)	Ghostfire (0.1)	Sudden Shock (0.5)	Spinerock Knoll (0.33)
Wipe Away (0.25)	Sylvan Scrying (0.25)	Giant's Ire (0.1)	Sulfur Elemental (0.5)	Terramorphic Expanse (0.25)
	Timbermare (0.5)	Glarewielder (0.1)	Sulfurous Blast (0.25)	Vivid Crag (0.25)
	Upwelling (0.33)	Goblin Lore (0.25)	Surging Flame (0.1)	Vivid Creek (0.25)
	Verdant Force (1)	Grapeshot (0.1)	Tarfire (0.1)	Vivid Grove (0.25)
	Vigor (1)	Greater Stone Spirit (0.1)	Tectonic Fiend (0.1)	
	Wild Pair (0.5)	Grinning Ignus (0.1)	Thick-Skinned Goblin (0.1)	
	Woodland Changeling (0.1)	Guerrilla Tactics (0.25)	Thunderblade Charge (0.33)	<b>Gold / Split</b>
		Hostility (Duh!) (1)	Tribal Flames (0.5)	Assault // Battery (0.33)
		Ignite Memories (0.25)	Wheel of Fate (0.5)	Radha, Heir to Keld (0.5)
		Incandescent Soulstoke (1.5)	Wild Ricochet (0.5)	

Part one and two of the contest can be found [here](#) and [here](#). Rallius chose to include green in his deck for two cards: **Squall Line** and **Rites of Flourishing**. **Squall Line** is the only instant-speed X damage spell on the challenge list, and **Rites of Flourishing** combines **Exploration** (for both players) plus **Howling Mine** (for both players). Are these cards worth a second color? Let's find out through testing!

### Game 1: Wilke (Mono-White Control)

I drop double **Fungal Reaches** and build up counters until turn seven, when I go **Hostility**, **Beacon of Destruction** (met with **Seht's Tiger**) and **Incinerate** (in response) in one turn. He drops **Calcidern**, and I play a second **Beacon of Destruction** and swing with my eight 3/1 guys. He blocks two and takes 18—I held back **Hostility** in the case of a second **Seht's Tiger** or some combat trick, as my hand was **Squall Line** and **Sudden Impact**. He plays **Stormfront Riders** and has one **Intervention Pact**, but that is not enough to survive the next attack phase.

Record: 1-0

### Game 2: manleypointer (White Weenie)

He gets three **Soul Wardens** and a **True Believer** on the board. I get **Ashling the Pilgrim**, and hold all of his guys at bay. He attempts to land a

Mirror Entity, which I promptly Lash Out. To his second Entity, I blow up Ashling. I follow up with a second Ashling and a Hostility, and he has only a True Believer and a Serra Avenger. I quickly grow my Ashling to monstrous proportions (by pumping it twice on my turn and twice on his), winning me the game in a couple of swings despite his high point of 32 life.

Record: 2-0

### Game 3: Erathmedor (Blue-Black Control)

He plays Stonybrook Angler and Shadowmage Infiltrator. I get down Ashling, and Incinerate his 1/3 guy, so he can't draw extra cards. He kills my Ashling with Sudden Death, and repeats this chain of events when I play a second Ashling. To turn around good faith, I Incinerate a second Shadowmage Infiltrator. I get Braid of Fire and double Ghitu Encampment on the board, and start riding the extra upkeep mana (and draw phase mana—remember, mana from Braid of Fire can be used on the card you draw that turn!) to activate my Encampments, and play Lash Out and Beacon of Destruction all at once. He succumbs on my fourth upkeep turn, while I still have Molten Disaster and Hostility in hand.

Record: 3-0

### Game 4: PDT1060 (Megrim)

He gets Wistful Thinking with a Megrim out, knocking double Sudden Shock, Lash Out, and Ashling from my hand. I do get double Braid of Fire and have Ghitu Encampments (double) and a second Ashling. He kills Ashling with Terror and drops Magus of the Jar. I kill Magus with an Incinerate and start swinging for 4 a turn, keeping my hand size at zero so I can't be forced to discard too many cards (unless he forces me to draw first). I am able to avoid mana burn by putting counters on Fungal Reaches or activating Ghitu Encampments multiple times. He drops a second Megrim, and I drop Rites of Flourishing. He answers with Forced Fruition, and I kill him with a Squall Line for 8 during my upkeep thanks to seven free mana from my double Braid of Fire.

Record: 4-0

### Game 5: IAMQBA (Blue-Black "Comes into Play" Creatures)

He gets Faceless Butcher x2 on my Ashling, but I kill them both with burn. He then evokes Mulldrifter, brings it back with Makeshift Mannequin, and drops Ravenous Rats (getting Hostility out of my hand). I lose a Ghitu Encampment to Nameless Inversion but get another two, plus a second Hostility (which gets in for 6). He uses Shriekmaw to kill my Hostility, and then throws it in front of an Encampment while at 9 life. On IAMQBA's next upkeep, I play Incinerate, which he lets through. Two of the three remaining cards in my hand were Sudden Shock, which finish him off.

Record: 5-0

Part of the original plan from Rallius was to use Rites of Flourishing to accelerate mana and to keep the hand size constantly filled. Unfortunately, I haven't really drawn any of the Rites yet. In order to test the deck in that direction, I decide to add in Howling Mines—not because the deck has shown any great weakness yet, but because I want to see how well the deck performs with a larger component of "draw-lots-of-cards."

To make room for the Howling Mines in the budget, I drop a pair of Molten Disasters and a Beacon of Destruction. I consider adding in another Sudden Impact or two, but first I want to see what happens when I can reliably draw a Howling Mine / Rites of Flourishing every game.



#### Rules Note

The untap, upkeep, and draw steps are all parts of the same phase, the beginning phase. This means that mana generated during upkeep sticks around until your draw, and doesn't clear (or mana burn you) until you end your draw step. This also means that you can pay the cumulative upkeep of Braid of Fire for the turn, see what card you draw, and then decide what to do with that mana.

**Out:** 1 Beacon of Destruction (.5), 2 Molten Disaster (8),

**In:** 3 Howling Mine (7.5)

**New Cost:** 28.81 tickets

Rallius Hostility 2		
		
<b>Main Deck</b> 60 cards		
3 Forest	4 Ashling the Pilgrim	3 Beacon of Destruction
4 Fungal Reaches	3 Hostility	4 Braid of Fire
4 Ghitu Encampment		3 Howling Mine
9 Mountain	7 creatures	4 Incinerate
3 Terramorphic Expanse		4 Lash Out
		1 Molten Disaster
23 lands		4 Rites of Flourishing
		2 Squall Line

2 Sudden Impact

3 Sudden Shock

30 other spells

### Game 6: shade256r (White Weenie)

I drop **Braid of Fire** x2 and forget that I need to turn off his **Knight of the Holy Nimbus**'s regeneration before hitting it with **Sudden Shock**, leaving me down a **Sudden Shock** and him up a **Knight of the Holy Nimbus**. This forces me to use a turn and another burn spell to kill it again, but I get run over by his other creatures backed by **Mirror Entity** in the meanwhile.

Record: 5-1

### Game 7: Quillboy (Blue-Black Control "Comes into Play" Creatures)

After a very long, long drawn out game, I get down **Howling Mine** and four **Rites of Flourishing**. I eventually get into a place where I have triple **Fungal Reach**, I'm at 2, he's at 4, and I have double **Braid of Fire**, one at six and one at two. I play **Beacon of Destruction** three times in one draw phase, each time drawing out **Venser, Shaper Savant** or a **Momentary Blink** for Venser. He taps an **Adarkar Wastes** to bring himself down to 3, and I then finish him off with **Sudden Shock** and **Molten Disaster** for one (I didn't **Sudden Shock** Venser because once he brought himself down to 3, I was virtually assured the win with my dual split second cards).

Record: 6-1

### Game 8: Grendel Nine (Warp World)

We have a turn where he gets a hasted **Hearthcage Giant** (with **Inner-Flame Acolyte**) after a **Warp World** and is able to pump it to 22 power, but forgets to attack (while I am at 20). However, I also had a burn spell I could have used to kill one of the other Elementals in response to him playing the Giant, allowing him to swing for a maximum of 19 that turn, and opening him for a lethal counterattack. Either way, I end up winning the match a couple of turns later, as I have **Hostility** and a buttload of burn spells.

Record: 7-1

### Game 9: meowth (White-Blue Damage Prevention)

My nightmare match-up: **Purity**, **Sacred Mesa**, **Story Circle** (set to red). I almost pull this one to a draw by using **Sudden Shock** on his **Martyr of Sands** (all four of them), and then using burn to kill **Purity** and **Squall Line** (backed by all four **Braid of Fires**) to force a draw, but I was short the **Sudden Shock** on the last turn to make it happen.

Record: 7-2

### Game 10: SpooJones (Black-Red Madness)

I tap my mana wrong, and end up dying instead of burning him out. Total brain fart. I should have won this game, but I lost because of a **Fungal Reaches** when I had double **Incinerate**, double **Sudden Shock** in hand, with him at 10 life. I tapped **Ghitu Encampment** and **Mountain** for the first burn spell, leaving me only a **Reaches** (no counters) and a **Forest**. I lose because of this mistake.

Record: 7-3

With the extra **Howling Mines**, I posted a 2-3 record. I probably could have lost the **Warp World** match up, and definitely would have won the Black-Red Madness match-up if I hadn't tapped my mana wrong, so these two are a wash. The **Purity** match is my nightmare match (**Purity** tends to trump **Hostility**, and I have huge problems getting past **Story Circle**). Even so, the **Howling Mine** / **Rites of Flourishing** configuration wasn't working well. This wasn't necessarily because of the card-drawing spells, but because my deck wasn't designed to take advantage of drawing cards.

Sure, I have lots of burn spells that I can draw, but in order to keep up with the number of cards in hand (especially if I start drawing 4-5 cards a turn), I need to aim my burn at an opponent's head (or it's simply easier to do so) versus going with a **Hostility** plan. The focus becomes more on cards like **Sudden Impact** and board sweepers, versus dropping a 6/6 creature, throwing a burn spell or two, and swinging with 30 power worth of hasted creatures.

I had two choices at this point—focus the deck more on a **Howling Mine** / **Rites of Flourishing** strategy (more **Sudden Impacts**, more board sweepers, less focus on **Hostility** and burn), or remove the mutual card-drawing spells and focus more on **Braid of Fire** and **Hostility**. In the end, I felt that the deck was more interesting as a **Braid of Fire** deck—one that could generate huge mana during upkeep and go nuts with **Hostility**—than as a retreat of an **Owling Mine** or **Turbo-Fog** deck with burn.



**Out:** 3 **Howling Mine** (-7.5), 4 **Rites of Flourishing** (-1.32), 2 **Sudden Impact** (-0.5)

So now I was going to go the **Braid of Fire** route. As suggested by reader Jareth, **Upwelling** is a natural choice to pair with the **Braid**—all mana generated by the **Braid** would carry over past my beginning phase, allowing me to use it towards sorceries and **Hostility** itself.



The four **Upwelling** were a pure swap for the four Rites, since they cost the same for this contest. I have a little leg room left to work with, so I add in three **Harmonize** for the three **Howling Mine** (draw cards just for myself!), leaving me two slots and about six and a fifth tickets left to work with. I decide to add in a couple of **Chandra Nalaar** to fill in those slots. Chandra does not work well with **Hostility** (she is not a spell once she is on the table as a planeswalker), but she fills the role of mass removal—her second ability lets her kill a creature a turn for the cost of only a single card (Chandra herself), and her third ability just wins the game. The first ability (a point of damage a turn) is just gravy if it gets going.

In: 4 **Upwelling** (1.32), 2 **Chandra Nalaar** (6), 3 **Harmonize** (3)  
**New Total:** 29.81

Rallius Hostility 3		
 		
<b>Main Deck</b>		
60 cards		
3 <b>Forest</b>	4 <b>Ashling the Pilgrim</b>	3 <b>Beacon of Destruction</b>
4 <b>Fungal Reaches</b>	3 <b>Hostility</b>	4 <b>Braid of Fire</b>
4 <b>Ghitu Encampment</b>		2 <b>Chandra Nalaar</b>
9 <b>Mountain</b>	7 creatures	3 <b>Harmonize</b>
3 <b>Terramorphic Expanse</b>		4 <b>Incinerate</b>
23 lands		4 <b>Lash Out</b>
		1 <b>Molten Disaster</b>
		2 <b>Squall Line</b>
		3 <b>Sudden Shock</b>
		4 <b>Upwelling</b>
		30 other spells

### Game 11: bennykdogg (Red-Green **Stuffy Doll**)

He gets down an early **Howling Mine** and **Stuffy Doll**, and I get **Upwelling** and build up a lot of mana. He drops **Gauntlet of Power** and **Yavimaya Dryad**. I **Lash Out**, revealing **Hostility**. With all the mana I've saved up, I drop **Hostility**, **Squall Line** for 6, play **Sudden Shock**, and swing for 30 damage.

Record: 8-3

### Game 12: nickallmighty (Mono-Green **Treefolk**)

I get stuck at three lands but get a **Braid of Fire**. This lets me kill a 6/6 **Dauntless Dourbark** with double **Lash Out** (dealing 6 to nickallmighty), drop **Ashling** and activate her for 3 (taking out **Treefolk Harbinger**, **Masked Adminerers**, an **Urza's Factory** token, and quadruple **Wall of Roots**), **Incinerate** nickallmighty directly, and play double **Beacon of Destruction**, winning the game.

Record: 9-3

### Game 13: Rhiox (Merfolk)

I get **Ashling the Pilgrim** and kill his Merfolk Reejeray with **Lash Out** and a **Mirror Entity** with **Sudden Shock**. When **Ashling** gets to 8/8, and his entire board is a single **Lord of Atlantis**, Rhiox concedes.

Record: 10-3

### Game 14: GuZen\_pt (Black-White **Rebels**)

I get an early **Braid of Fire** and use it to build up a lot of mana on double **Fungal Reaches**. I then play **Upwelling** and double **Harmonize**, and eat **Return to Dust** on the **Braid** and the **Upwelling**. I drop **Chandra**, and use her plus **Incinerate** to stop all of his Rebels within two turns. Then **Hostility** comes out to play, followed by **Beacon of Destruction**, for 21 points of hasty damage.

Record: 11-3

### Game 15: Ferrethater (Four-Color **Elementals**)

He gets **Smokebraider**, **Elemental Harbinger**, **Changeling Berserker** (drawing out a **Sudden Shock** from me to kill his Harbinger, so he has to champion the **Smokebraider** to keep the **Berserker**, sticking him at three mana) and **Incandescent Soulstoke**. I get **Ashling** to chump block, and then wipe his team with **Molten Disaster** for 3 (killing the **Soulstoke**, which drops the **Berserker** to 5/3, killing it). I then use **Chandra Nalaar** to kill off his returned **Smokebraider**. From there, I control the game with a combination of **Chandra** and burn until I finish him off with **Chandra** and double **Incinerate** some turns down the road.

Record: 12-3

I can honestly say that I didn't expect this deck to go 10-0 (not counting the foray into a **Howling Mine** / **Rites of Flourishing** deck), but as a strict **Hostility** / **Braid of Fire** deck, I went unbeaten testing for this article. **Braid of Fire** proved to be immensely useful, and it made me wish that I could have included more storage lands in this deck (I



couldn't because I didn't have them on the list of cards available for this pool—if it had, I would have swapped in three **Molten Slagheaps** for three **Terramorphic Expanses**).

If I were to keep evolving this deck, I would want to find a way to fit in either **Char-Rumbler** or **Flamekin Brawler**. Both are effectively X spells on creatures, and take advantage of the mana this deck can pump out. Chandra worked well as an addition, allowing me time to stop smaller creatures while dropping **Hostility** and a host of 3/1 tokens. This deck was also a blast to play, and it made me wonder why **Braid of Fire** has never seen serious tournament play—it can generate insane amounts of mana quickly, works extremely well with the *Time Spiral* storage lands, and reminds me of playing with **Æther Vial** when that card was legal.

Before I say goodbye for the year, here are the results of the last poll.

While Ben is waiting for to see the Hostility decks posted to the forums, which format would you most like to see him play?		
Classic, where most cards are legal.	2685	40.5%
Highlander, where there can be only one!	2270	34.3%
Classic Highlander – I like them both!	1669	25.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6624</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

This will be the focus of my first column of 2008! Also, let me know what you liked didn't like about Building on a Budget this year—in the forums, please sound off about which column(s) was your favorite, which you didn't like, and which features you'd like to see return again in 2008! (10 Decks in 10 Weeks, the deckbuilding challenge, an Extended **Battle of Wits** deck, etc.)

Thank you all for being a great readership this year, and thank you for all the contributions you've made—ideas, decks, and forum feedback—which have made this a great time to be part of the Building on a Budget community.

Happy Holidays!

Ben Bleiweiss

*Ben Bleiweiss has written about his obsession with **Magic: The Gathering** for over a decade. He's travelled the world because of **Magic**, both as a player and a writer. When not spending time playing **Magic**, writing about **Magic**, or thinking about **Magic**, Ben is employed by [StarCityGames.com](http://StarCityGames.com), where he works with **Magic** cards all day long. He lives with his wife in Virginia, and they sleep comfortably at night under their Orgg down comforter.*



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