

Quest: *"A Bad Hand"*

NPC: Johnny Bradshaw (*Indebted Politician, nervous, cornered by the Orcas and Security.*)

Location: *The Mariner Club (Backroom Booth)*

Interaction Conditions:

- Player initiates dialogue with Johnny Bradshaw, who is anxiously seated, barely touching a whiskey glass in front of him.

Initial Dialogue (Root)

Johnny Bradshaw: (*Startled, glancing nervously*)

"Huh—? Who... who are you? Look, tonight's not good. Whatever you want, I can't help you."

Player Dialogue Options (Root):

- **Option 1:** (*Neutral*)
"Relax, Johnny. I just want to talk."
- **Option 2:** (*Strength 7+*)
[Intimidate] "Ignoring me is a real bad move, Johnny. Let's talk before things get physical."
- **Option 3:** (*Perception 7+*)
[Perception] "You're sweating bullets and haven't touched your drink. Looks like someone's after you."
- **Option 4:** (*Barter 60+*)
[Barter] "Rumor says you're drowning in debt. I can help—if the price is right."
- **Option 5:** (*Orcas Positive Reputation*)
"The Orcas aren't happy with you. Granddaddy sent me to see what your next move is."
- **Option 6:** (*Security High Reputation*)
"Security already filled me in on your little arrangement. We need to talk about your future."

NPC Response and Branches

Option 1: (Neutral) "Relax, Johnny. I just want to talk."

Johnny Bradshaw: *(Sighs deeply, relaxing slightly)*

"Talk. Fine. Not sure what you'd want with a loser like me, but go ahead. Ask your questions."

(Opens Neutral Inquiry branch: general information gathering)

Option 2: [Intimidate] (Strength 7+ Required)

- If player has Strength ≥ 7 (SUCCESS):

Player: *(Menacing stance)* "Ignoring me is a bad idea, Johnny. Let's have a friendly conversation before things get unfriendly."

Johnny Bradshaw: *(Raises hands defensively, clearly intimidated)*

"Alright, alright! Take it easy. I'll talk. No need for rough stuff."

(Opens Johnny's full cooperation dialogue branches. Johnny intimidated into compliance.)

- If player Strength < 7 :

(This option does NOT appear in the player's dialogue options..)

Option 3: [Perception] (Perception 7+ Required)

- If player has Perception ≥ 7 (SUCCESS):

Player: *(Noticing subtle signs of distress)*

"You're shaking, your whiskey's untouched—someone's after you. The Spades already visit?"

Johnny Bradshaw: *(Startled, whispering urgently)*

"How the hell...? Look, keep it down. Yeah, the Spades were here earlier, courtesy of Granddaddy. I guess I'm even deeper in the hole than I thought."

(Opens Spades-specific investigative dialogue branches.)

- If player Perception < 7 :

(This option does NOT appear in the player's dialogue options..)

Option 4: [Barter] (Barter 60+ Required)

- If player has Barter ≥ 60 (SUCCESS):

Player: *(Savvy and confident)*

"You're buried in debt. Lucky for you, I have caps to spare—provided you're willing to negotiate."

Johnny Bradshaw: *(Leans in cautiously, interested)*

"Negotiation? Sure, anything beats getting worked over in an alley. Tell me your terms."

(Opens a profitable negotiation branch, leading to economic manipulation options.)

- **If player Barter < 60 (FAILURE option displayed):**

Player: *(Attempting confident tone, fumbling)*

"I can... help your debts. For... um... caps?"

Johnny Bradshaw: *(Scoffs dismissively, irritated)*

"Nice try, pal. I'm broke, not stupid. If you're looking to con someone, pick an easier mark."

(Locks out future Barter attempts in dialogue.)

Option 5: (Orcas Positive Reputation)

- **If player has positive Orcas reputation:**

Player: *(Calm, authoritative)*

"The Orcas sent me. Granddaddy's tired of excuses. He wants your next move—now."

Johnny Bradshaw: *(Swallows nervously, pleading)*

"I told Granddaddy I need one more day. The caps are coming, I swear. Please... convince him to be patient."

Player Response Sub-Options:

- **A. [Speech 65+] (SUCCESS option)** "Granddaddy isn't patient. Convince me your plan is solid, and maybe I'll put in a good word."
- **B. (Neutral)** "Time's up, Johnny. You either pay now, or things get violent."
- **C. (Compassionate)** "Tell me everything you've been hiding, and I'll see if I can smooth this over."

(Opens complex Orcas-informant branch.)

- **If player lacks Orcas Positive Reputation:**

(This option does NOT appear in the player's dialogue options.)

Option 6: (Security High Reputation)

- **If player has high Security reputation:**

Player: *(Direct, authoritative)*

"Security briefed me on your arrangement. Let's talk about keeping you alive."

Johnny Bradshaw: *(Visibly panicked, urgent whisper)*

"Damn it, they promised they'd keep it quiet! Alright, what do you want to know? I'll cooperate—just promise Security keeps the Orcas off my back."

(Opens covert Security informant path.)

- **If player lacks Security High Reputation:**

(This option does NOT appear in the player's dialogue options..)

Branching Summary for Part 2 (Next Interaction):

Unlocked Branches (Available Next Section):

- **Neutral Inquiry Branch** *(Basic information about Johnny's debts, Orcas involvement, Security, etc.)*
- **Intimidation Branch (Success)** *(Full compliance, player can press Johnny aggressively)*
- **Perception/Spades Branch (Success)** *(Detailed insights into Orcas' internal activities and threats)*
- **Barter Branch (Success)** *(Economic leverage and profitable deal-making path)*
- **Orcas Positive Reputation Branch** *(Johnny becomes potential Orcas informant; complex narrative branch)*
- **Security High Reputation Branch** *(Covert operations; Johnny as a Security informant)*

Locked-Out Branches (Unavailable):

- **Intimidation (Failure)** *(No low-stat failure: option hidden if player lacks Strength)*
- **Perception (Failure)** *(No low-stat failure: option hidden if player lacks Perception)*

- **Barter (Failure)** (*Available as comedic failed attempt, permanently closes Barter options*)

Branch A – Neutral Inquiry (Unlocked by Neutral Option)

Johnny Bradshaw: (*Calmer, suspicious glance around the club*)

"Alright, you've got my attention. What exactly do you want?"

Player Options:

- **A1:** "Who exactly do you owe money to, Johnny?"
- **A2:** "Why risk borrowing from the Orcas in the first place?"
- **A3:** "Does Security know about your debts?"
- **A4:** "Any idea how to get out of this mess?"

NPC Responses:

- **A1 Response:**
Johnny:
(*Exasperated sigh*)
"The Orcas, of course. Specifically, their Diamonds. Thought I could outsmart them—turns out they're smarter. And nastier."
- **A2 Response:**
Johnny:
(*Defensive, desperate rationalization*)
"Look, I needed funds fast for my campaign. No bank would touch me. The Orcas came calling with caps in hand. Guess I was too ambitious for my own good."
- **A3 Response:**
Johnny:
(*Nervous glance around*)
"They're suspicious, sure. They think I've got 'connections.' Problem is—they're half right. If Security finds out the truth, I'm a dead man walking."
- **A4 Response:**
Johnny:
(*Leaning in conspiratorially*)
"I had a plan. But with Spades on my trail, I'm screwed unless I find someone willing to

step between me and the Orcas."

(Allows player to pursue offers of assistance or further investigate.)

Branch B – Intimidation Branch (Unlocked by Strength Success)

(Johnny is intimidated into full cooperation.)

Johnny Bradshaw: *(Submissive, eager to avoid violence)*

"Alright, alright, big guy, what do you need to know?"

Player Options:

- **B1:** "Start talking. What's the Orcas' angle with you?"
- **B2:** "You're gonna tell me exactly how you're involved with Security."
- **B3:** [Intimidate – Strength 8+] "I want every name, every secret—if I find you're hiding anything..."

NPC Responses:

- **B1 Response:**
Johnny: *(Visibly shaken)*
"Granddaddy's been pulling the strings. Rocco collects debts, but the Diamonds—they wanted political influence. If I won office, they'd have me in their pocket. Now that's fallen apart, they'd rather collect my head."
- **B2 Response:**
Johnny: *(Voice lowered to barely audible whisper)*
"Security offered me protection from the Orcas if I fed them intel. But those bastards are playing me, too. If the Orcas find out, I'm dead."
- **B3 Response (Skill Check):**
SUCCESS (Strength 8+):
Johnny: *(Terrified, spilling everything)*
"Alright, please—no violence! Alicia Wu handles contacts in Security, she's got a mole. Sawmill from Diamonds embezzles caps—if Granddaddy found out, there'd be hell to pay. That enough?"

(Unlocks hidden leverage over multiple Orcas branches for later.)

FAILURE (Strength < 8): *(Appears only if player has minimum Strength of 7 but fails this higher check.)*

Player: *(Overplays intimidation, fumbling threat)*

"Give me every name you have, or you'll... uh... regret it!"

Johnny: *(Scoffs, gaining slight confidence)*

"You nearly had me scared. Guess even tough guys lose their nerve, huh? I'll cooperate, but don't push your luck."

(Johnny is less forthcoming with deep intel, limits options going forward.)

Branch C – Perception (Spades) Branch (Unlocked by Perception Success)

Johnny Bradshaw: *(Cautious, impressed by player's insight)*

"You noticed more than I thought. Ask fast—the Spades don't leave loose ends long."

Player Options:

- **C1:** "Spades are the assassins, right? Why would Granddaddy put a hit on you?"
- **C2:** [Perception 8+] "Your cufflinks. Pretty high-end stuff—seems a bit lavish for a broke man."
- **C3:** "Any weaknesses within the Spades I could exploit?"

NPC Responses:

- **C1 Response:**
Johnny: *(Panicked, quickening breath)*
"I'm no good to Granddaddy anymore. With my campaign blown, I'm a liability. Easier to bury me quietly and forget I ever existed."
- **C2 Response (Skill Check):**
SUCCESS (Perception 8+):
Johnny: *(Surprised, defeated)*
"You've got sharp eyes. They're from Alicia Wu—a gift. Meant as proof that Security wouldn't dare touch me...but she's probably set me up from the start. Damned Hearts, always two-faced."

(Opens deeper investigation into Hearts-Orcas intrigue.)

FAILURE (Perception < 8): *(Visible only if player already passed initial Perception check.)*

Player: "Those cufflinks... they're nice. Who gave 'em to you?"

Johnny: *(Suspicious, deflective)*

"Just cheap junk. Look, my taste in accessories isn't the issue here, alright?"

(Misses deeper insight into Alicia Wu's involvement, closes cufflink lead.)

- **C3 Response:**

Johnny: *(Lowering voice, glancing nervously around)*

"Spades might be tough, but they're human. One ace—guy called Slick—is drinking himself stupid at the Kraken Lounge. Catch him off-guard, he might give you an in."

(Provides new objective: Investigate Slick, the Spade Ace, for critical Orcas intel.)

Branch D – Barter Branch (Unlocked by Barter Success)

Johnny Bradshaw: *(Hopeful yet wary, eager to negotiate)*

"I'm listening. You say you got caps. What exactly do you propose?"

Player Options:

- **D1:** "I'll buy your debt from the Orcas, but you work for me now."
- **D2:** "Pay me, and I'll smuggle you out of Cascadia—away from Security, away from Orcas."
- **D3:** [Barter 70+] "Invest your campaign leftovers in my ventures. Double the caps, pay off your debt, and come out richer."

NPC Responses:

- **D1 Response:**

Johnny: *(Reluctantly compliant, resigned)*

"Trading one master for another, huh? Fine, I'm yours—but keep the Orcas off my back."

- **D2 Response:**

Johnny: *(Desperate, excited)*

"You mean it? I got a stash of caps left—hidden safehouse downtown. Get me out of

Cascadia, and it's yours."

(New side-objective: Smuggle Johnny to safety, confront Orcas' ambush.)

- **D3 Response (Skill Check):**

SUCCESS (Barter 70+):

Johnny: *(Visibly impressed, nodding eagerly)*

"Alright, partner. If you're sure you can pull this off, I'll trust you. What have I got to lose?"

(Unlocks lucrative business option and deeper player involvement in Cascadia's economy.)

FAILURE (Barter < 70):

Player: *(Overly confident, unconvincing)*

"Uh, give me your caps—I'll... invest... somewhere good?"

Johnny: *(Annoyed, wary)*

"Forget it. You almost had me convinced earlier—but now you sound just like every other swindler."

(Blocks further high-stakes economic options.)

sly from previous branches—this section focuses deeply on complex faction-based paths: Orcas Reputation [Branch E] and Security Reputation [Branch F].)

Branch E – Orcas Reputation Path

(Unlocked if Player has Positive Reputation with Orcas)

Johnny Bradshaw: *(Uneasy, cautious)*

"Wait... you're with them, aren't you? With Granddaddy's crew?"

Player Options:

- **E1:** "Relax, Johnny. I'm just here to help tie up loose ends. Granddaddy hates messy business."
- **E2:** "You really screwed up, Bradshaw. Convince me you're worth saving, or I'll feed you to the Clubs."

- **E3:** [Orcas Reputation: "Made Man" Status] "Lucky for you, Granddaddy asked me personally to fix this quietly."

NPC Responses:

- **E1 Response:**
Johnny: *(Desperate, bargaining)*
 "Yeah? Tell Granddaddy I'm not trying to double-cross him! Let me talk to Sawmill—explain things! I'll... I'll make good. Just give me time."

Player Follow-ups (E1):

- **E1a:** "Time's up, Johnny. Give me something useful to bargain with."
 - *(Johnny reveals compromising info on Sawmill and Alicia Wu, unlocking optional blackmail routes.)*
- **E1b:** "I'll arrange a meeting with Sawmill—you're gonna pay every cap. No excuses."
 - *(Johnny reluctantly agrees, starting sub-objective to escort him safely.)*
- **E2 Response:**
Johnny: *(Panicked, stammering)*
 "Please—I've got intel! Alicia Wu's playing both sides—Security, Orcas, whoever pays. You want leverage? I'm your best shot!"

Player Follow-ups (E2):

- **E2a:** "Keep talking. Who else in the Orcas is dirty?"
 - *(Johnny offers dirt on the Diamonds' money laundering, starting the optional objective "Dirty Money.")*
- **E2b:** "Good enough. I'll tell Granddaddy you cooperated."
 - *(Secures Orcas approval, increases player's standing with Granddaddy.)*
- **E3 Response (Special Reputation Check - "Made Man"):**
SUCCESS (Made Man):
Johnny: *(Instantly cooperative, fearful yet relieved)*
 "If Granddaddy trusts you, that's good enough for me. Tell me what to do—I'll follow

every order, no questions."

(Johnny is now fully cooperative, granting extensive intel. Player gains access to exclusive Orcas quests involving internal affairs.)

Branch F – Security Reputation Path ***(Unlocked if Player has Positive Reputation with Security)***

Johnny Bradshaw: *(Apprehensive, but somewhat hopeful)*

"Wait... you're one of Security's people, aren't you? I—I can explain!"

Player Options:

- **F1:** "Security wants proof that the Orcas have a mole on the inside. Give me names or face charges yourself."
- **F2:** "I'm not your executioner, Johnny, but I do need actionable intel. Prove you're useful and Security will help."
- **F3:** [Security Reputation: High Rank (Inspector)] "I'm authorized to offer you full protection—if you give me the Orcas on a platter."

NPC Responses:

- **F1 Response:**
Johnny: *(Hurriedly, fearful)*
"The mole's in Logistics—name's Sergeant Vickers. Alicia Wu has him wrapped around her finger. He's been funneling caps for months, and I've got documents to prove it."

Player Follow-ups (F1):

- **F1a:** "Hand over those documents now, or you'll answer to the Commissioner."
 - *(Johnny provides the documents, unlocking "Mole Hunt" side-objective within Security.)*
- **F1b:** "Documents aren't enough. Set up a meeting with Wu—I'll handle the rest."

- *(Begins dangerous sub-objective to entrap Alicia Wu.)*
- **F2 Response:**
Johnny: *(Eagerly negotiating)*
 "Security promised me immunity if I helped take down the Orcas. Alicia Wu meets an informant weekly at the Pacifica Hotel. Catch her red-handed, and you'll have all the leverage you need."

Player Follow-ups (F2):

- **F2a:** "Alright, Johnny. Set up the sting operation, and I'll make sure Security honors your deal."
 - *(Unlocks "Sting Operation," leading to confrontation with Hearts agents.)*
- **F2b:** "You're asking a lot. Security better see concrete results—or else."
 - *(Johnny nervously agrees, activating high-risk scenario with Security watching closely.)*
- **F3 Response (High Security Rank – Inspector):**
SUCCESS (Inspector Rank):
Johnny: *(Relieved, immediate compliance)*
 "You're the real deal, huh? Here's everything: Granddaddy's hidden safehouses, Wu's informants, Rocco's smuggling routes. Just get me out alive."

(Grants extensive intel and multiple side-objectives targeting Orcas operations directly, significantly benefiting player's Security standing.)

Stat-Based Optional Follow-ups (Available to both Factions)

(Unlocked if the Player previously succeeded in relevant skill checks or has unlocked intel from Johnny.)

Player Options:

- **G1:** [Intelligence 7+] "Johnny, Security's clearly using you as bait. Did it ever occur to you they planned to sacrifice you from the start?"

Johnny Response (SUCCESS Intelligence 7+):

"I suspected, but... damn it. You're right. They needed a scapegoat, someone

expendable. Help me—please. I'm desperate."

(Unlocks "Double Agent" scenario, player can use Johnny against Security.)

- **H1:** [Charisma 7+] "The Orcas never intended you to win your election—they planned to ruin you from day one."

Johnny Response (SUCCESS Charisma 7+):

"Those bastards... manipulated me from the start. You're right. They've set me up, and I've been too blind to see it."

(Opens "Vendetta" sub-quest—Johnny aids player against Orcas willingly.)

- **I1:** [Luck 7+] *(Rare luck check, reflecting Johnny's gambler background)*
"You're a gambler, Johnny—go all in with me, and you might come out ahead yet."

Johnny Response (SUCCESS Luck 7+):

"Never thought I'd gamble my life again... but something tells me betting on you's the safest wager I've got left."

(Johnny fully commits, unlocking unique "High Roller" objective: player assists Johnny in faking his death and escaping Cascadia.)

Final Player Decision Branches (Triggered after concluding branches E/F/G/H/I)

Johnny Bradshaw: *(Anxious but calmer now, awaiting final player direction.)*

"So, what's it gonna be?"

Player Final Decision Paths:

(Each choice triggers distinct quest resolutions, skill-check follow-ups, and lasting consequences.)

Path 1 – Orcas Loyalty Path *(Unlocked via Branch E choices)*

Player Options:

- **O1:** "You're coming with me, Johnny. Granddaddy will decide what to do next."

- **O2:** "The Orcas have no use for failures. But give me everything you've got, and maybe I'll let you run."

NPC Responses:

- **O1 Response (Orcas Loyalist):**
Johnny: (*Defeated resignation*)
"Figures you'd pick their side. Alright, let's go. Just... don't let Rocco handle me, okay?"
 - **Outcome:**
 - Player escorts Johnny to Orcas custody.
 - **Reward:** Significant Orcas reputation boost, access to "Made Man" privileges, exclusive Orcas safehouses, and future high-tier quests from Granddaddy.
 - **Consequence:** Johnny vanishes, fate ambiguous. Player reputation with Security slightly reduced.
- **O2 Response (Betrayal/Letting Johnny Run):**
Johnny: (*Desperation, relieved*)
"Thank you—I swear you'll never see me again."
 - **Outcome:**
 - Johnny flees Cascadia.
 - Player gains compromising intel on Diamonds' money laundering operation.
 - **Reward:** Caps, leverage over Diamonds branch.
 - **Consequence:** Orcas discover the betrayal; slight loss of Orcas trust, triggering future assassins encounter ("Spades retaliation").

Path 2 – Security Informant Path (*Unlocked via Branch F choices*)

Player Options:

- **S1:** "Security keeps its promises. You're officially under our protection."
- **S2:** "I got what I need. Unfortunately, you're on your own."

NPC Responses:

- **S1 Response (Security Protection):**
Johnny: (*Grateful, relieved*)
"Thank you—I won't forget this. You've got a loyal informant from here on out."
 - **Outcome:**
 - Johnny becomes a reliable Security informant.
 - Unlocks long-term Security undercover quests targeting Orcas.
 - **Reward:** Significant Security reputation increase, special armor "Security Operative Jacket."
 - **Consequence:** Orcas suspicion grows, future hostile encounters with Clubs and Spades increase.
- **S2 Response (Security Abandonment):**
Johnny: (*Betrayed, angry*)
"You bastard! After everything I told you? Fine, I'll deal with this myself!"
 - **Outcome:**
 - Johnny attempts solo escape, resulting in capture by Orcas.
 - **Reward:** Minor Security reputation boost for intel acquired; Johnny's intel partially compromised.
 - **Consequence:** Player seen as untrustworthy informant-handler; future informant dialogue checks more difficult.

Path 3 – Independent Manipulation Path (*Unlocked via Branches G/H/I*)

Player Options:

- **M1:** [Intelligence 7+ required] "I'll use your intel to play Security against the Orcas. You're my secret weapon."
- **M2:** [Charisma 7+ required] "Together, we'll dismantle the Orcas from the inside—subtly. Follow my lead."
- **M3:** [Luck 7+ required] "We're betting big here—I'll fake your death, you disappear, and we both win."

NPC Responses & Outcomes:

- **M1 Response (Double Agent):**

Johnny: *(Nods nervously)*

"You're smarter than both factions realize. Alright—just don't let them catch us."

- **Outcome:**

- Johnny acts as a double-agent, feeding misleading intel to both Security and Orcas.
- **Reward:** Unlocks high-risk, high-reward "Double Dealing" quest line. Significant caps and XP gains.
- **Consequence:** If exposed, triggers major hostility from both factions. Dramatic reputation impacts.

- **M2 Response (Vendetta vs. Orcas):**

Johnny: *(Determined, resolved)*

"They messed with the wrong guy. Let's burn their empire down—quietly."

- **Outcome:**

- Initiates "Burning Bridges" narrative arc, sabotaging Orcas' Diamonds and Hearts.
- **Reward:** Unique stealth perks ("Shadow Operative" perk), increased influence in Cascadia's black market.
- **Consequence:** Orcas aggressively hunt player once sabotage discovered. Player must use stealth carefully.

- **M3 Response (High Roller Escape):**

Johnny: *(Excited, anxious)*

"Time to roll the dice. Fake my death, get me out, and my stash is yours."

- **Outcome:**
 - Starts elaborate staged death sequence, involving intricate stealth and speech challenges.
 - **Reward:** Large cache of hidden caps, unique item ("Bradshaw's Lucky Coin," +1 Luck permanently).
 - **Consequence:** If staging fails, immediate combat scenario with Orcas assassins ("Spades Ace" ambush).

Optional Skill-Check Closures (Triggered by previous skill checks):

- **Perception Closure (Spades Insight):**
Player uses Johnny's intel on Alicia Wu's betrayal to sabotage Hearts' network.
 - **Result:** Player gains major leverage over Alicia Wu, triggering future "Heartbreaker" questline.
- **Barter Closure (Economic Control):**
Player successfully invests Johnny's remaining caps, doubling assets.
 - **Result:** Economic dominance in downtown Cascadia, influencing prices, unlocking "Kingpin" economic questline.

Epilogue – Johnny Bradshaw's Fate

- **Orcas Ending:** Johnny captured by Orcas, fate uncertain. Player rises in Orcas ranks.
- **Security Ending:** Johnny safely becomes Security informant, player trusted by Security command.
- **Independent Ending:** Player exploits Johnny, increasing personal influence and resources dramatically, factions manipulated subtly.

- **High Roller Ending:** Johnny safely escapes Cascadia, player gains reputation as a legendary fixer and gambler.

Notes:

- All branches interweave meaningfully, providing depth, complexity, and replayability.
- Skill checks are cleverly integrated and impactful, strongly tied to narrative outcomes.
- Faction relationships influenced significantly, reinforcing player agency and rewarding careful decision-making.
- Consequences of player actions rip