

Side Quest: A Bad Hand

Locations:

- **Blackfin Lounge** (*Front establishment and Orcas HQ*)
- **Cascade City Hall** (*Political center & Johnny's campaign office*)
- **Hidden Safehouse** (*Secret negotiation location*)

Quest Overview:

Johnny Bradshaw, an ambitious Cascadian politician and city council hopeful, has spectacularly failed his recent campaign, squandering massive funds secretly loaned by the Orcas crime syndicate. His extravagant promises were meant to destabilize Cascadia's political scene to the Orcas' benefit, but Bradshaw failed catastrophically, damaging the Orcas' careful plans.

Now, Granddaddy, the shadowy robobrain kingpin of the Orcas, has ordered Rocco, his ruthless public representative, to either recover the money or eliminate Johnny to preserve their reputation. However, Alicia Wu (Hearts Ace) believes Johnny still holds significant political value, potentially as a double-agent within Security or city politics.

The Drifter is drawn into the tense negotiation, thrust into a clandestine power struggle that threatens to unravel Cascadia's fragile political balance, pulling in factions like Security, the Red Leafs, and the NCR, each trying to exploit the situation for their own ends.

Key NPCs:

Orcas:

- **Granddaddy** (*Robobrain, former pre-war mob boss Franklin Calamari. Mastermind manipulating Cascadian politics subtly from behind the scenes. Views Johnny's failure as an affront but also sees deeper strategic possibilities.*)
- **Rocco** (*Public face, ruthless, fears losing favor with Granddaddy. Wants Johnny eliminated quickly to demonstrate Orcas' ruthless strength.*)
- **Alicia Wu** (*Head of Hearts, pragmatic diplomat. Sees Johnny as useful leverage against Security.*)

- **Sawmill** (*Head of Diamonds, upset about financial losses; insists that the loss of investment must be compensated immediately.*)

Johnny Bradshaw: (*Politician, charming but reckless. Debt-ridden and desperate; terrified of Orcas' reprisal but hopeful to maintain influence in Cascade.*)

Quest Gameplay:

Stage 1: Introduction – A Phantom Debt

- **The Drifter is contacted by Alicia Wu** at Blackfin Lounge, discretely asking for help. Johnny Bradshaw, a once-promising council candidate secretly funded by the Orcas, is facing execution for losing their funds. Wu insists Johnny's survival has larger political implications.
- Wu asks the Drifter to quietly investigate the reasons behind Johnny's failure before Rocco takes direct action.

Stage Objective: Talk to Johnny Bradshaw.

Stage 2: Investigate Johnny's Campaign Office

- Johnny admits his failure was orchestrated. He claims internal sabotage, his financial backer inside Security, Commissioner Rothwell, withdrew support abruptly, leaving Johnny bankrupt.
- Evidence found in Johnny's office (terminal hacking, ledger examination) suggests Security manipulated Johnny to expose Orcas' involvement in politics, destabilizing their hold.

Skill Checks (Smart & Cascadia-Relevant):

- **Science [MED]** → Hack terminal to uncover Security's involvement.
- **Speech [MED]** → Question Johnny for hidden motivations.
- **Barter [MED]** → Recognize financial irregularities and uncover hidden Orcas-Security conflict.

Stage Objective: Return to Alicia Wu with findings.

Stage 3: Negotiation at Blackfin Lounge

- Present findings to Alicia Wu, Rocco, and optionally Granddaddy himself.
- Dialogue is politically charged:
 - Wu pushes to exploit Johnny against Security, turning their trap into leverage.
 - Rocco sees Johnny as a liability, insists quick execution to show strength.
 - Granddaddy remains initially neutral, observing and testing the Drifter.

Major Choices:

- Side with **Wu (Hearts)**, turning Johnny into a double-agent.
- Side with **Rocco (Clubs)**, proving Orcas' ruthless authority.
- Attempt a balanced compromise (**extremely difficult, requires high Speech & Charisma check**).

Stage Objective: Make critical decision on Johnny's fate.

Stage 4: The Phantom Gambit (Branching Outcomes)

Option A: Alicia's Gambit (Hearts)

- Drifter helps Johnny fake his death publicly, secretly infiltrating Security ranks as a double-agent.
- Johnny's "death" publicly restores Orcas' fearsome reputation without bloodshed.
- Security weakened politically, Orcas gain internal leverage.

Outcome:

- Orcas' political influence grows.
- Significant Hearts & Wu reputation boost, diplomatic benefits.
- Moderate Security faction hostility.

Option B: Rocco's Ruthlessness (Clubs)

- Drifter publicly eliminates Johnny. Message sent that Orcas do not tolerate failure.
- Immediate respect (and fear) of Orcas grows.
- Other factions, especially Security and Red Leafs, intimidated.

Outcome:

- High Orcas Club reputation boost.
- Enhanced Orcas dominance, but Security becomes vigilant.
- Granddaddy privately appreciates decisiveness.

Option C: The Phantom King (Perfect Compromise)

- Difficult speech-check compromise; Johnny becomes secretly indebted forever to Orcas, visibly politically irrelevant yet privately controlled, orchestrated by Granddaddy directly.
- Public believes Orcas executed Johnny; secretly he's their puppet.
- Granddaddy impressed, seeing Drifter as a key player.

Outcome:

- Major personal rewards, Granddaddy's direct favor.
- Orcas' political influence massively increases unseen.
- Minimal overt faction hostility, political benefits long-term.

Rewards & Consequences:

- **Caps & XP**
- **Exclusive Reputation Bonuses:**
 - Hearts: Diplomatic perks, discounts, and unique intel.

- Clubs: Exclusive combat-oriented perks, unique mafia-style weapons.
- Perfect Compromise: Granddaddy's special favor, unlocking rare black-market gear and Orcas services.
- **Long-term Cascadian Impact:**
 - Johnny's fate affects Cascadia's political stability and faction relationships significantly.
 - Each outcome fundamentally shifts Orcas' power dynamic in the city, with clear ripple effects in other faction quests and storylines.

Quest Stages Outline

Stage	Description
10	Speak with Alicia Wu at Blackfin Lounge about Johnny Bradshaw's debt situation.
15	Investigate Johnny Bradshaw's campaign office for evidence of his political sabotage. <i>(Optional: Hack Johnny's terminal [Science 50+] for additional intel.)</i>
16	<i>(Optional)</i> Examine campaign financial records to uncover discrepancies (Barter 50+).
17	<i>(Optional)</i> Persuade Johnny to reveal deeper connections with Security (Speech 50+).
20	Confront Johnny Bradshaw directly about his campaign failure and the Orcas' lost funds.
21	<i>(Optional)</i> Use Intelligence (7+) or Speech (60+) to force Johnny to admit Security involvement.
25	Return to Alicia Wu with the findings regarding Johnny's political sabotage.
30	Attend a negotiation meeting at Blackfin Lounge with Alicia Wu, Rocco, and Granddaddy.
35	<i>(Optional)</i> Privately persuade Alicia Wu to use Johnny as a political double-agent (Speech 65+).
36	<i>(Optional)</i> Privately persuade Rocco to see Johnny as a liability and arrange immediate elimination (Strength or Intimidation 60+).

- 37 *(Optional)* Privately negotiate directly with Granddaddy to orchestrate a subtle compromise (Speech 75+ or Charisma 8+).
- 40 Choose a side: Support Alicia's political gambit, Support Rocco's ruthless approach, or attempt Granddaddy's secret compromise.
- 45 *(Optional)* Help Johnny Bradshaw stage his own death convincingly (Medicine 50+ or Stealth 60+) as part of Alicia's plan.
- 46 *(Optional)* Execute Johnny Bradshaw publicly on Rocco's orders to reinforce Orcas' ruthless reputation.
- 47 *(Optional)* Successfully arrange Granddaddy's secret compromise, turning Johnny into a secret puppet (Requires previous Speech or Charisma success from Stage 37).
- 50 *(Optional)* Plant false evidence implicating Security in Johnny's death (Stealth 65+ or Science 60+).
- 55 *(Optional)* Sabotage Security's surveillance in the city to protect Johnny's new identity or the Orcas' involvement (Repair or Science 60+).
- 60 Report back to your chosen Orcas leader (Wu, Rocco, or Granddaddy) to initiate the final act.
- 65 *(Optional)* Inform Commissioner Rothwell (Security) anonymously about Orcas involvement to destabilize both groups.
- 66 *(Optional)* Tip off the NCR or Red Leafs anonymously, creating external faction tension.
- 70 Participate in final confrontation scenario based on your earlier choices:
- 71 Final Confrontation A (Hearts): Successfully fake Johnny's death and insert him into Security as a double-agent without being detected.
- 72 Final Confrontation B (Clubs): Eliminate Johnny publicly and fend off retaliation from Security operatives.
- 73 Final Confrontation C (Phantom Compromise): Stage Johnny's apparent death convincingly, fooling both Security and the public while secretly installing Johnny as Granddaddy's political puppet.
- 80 Ending 1 (Hearts Victory): Orcas gain significant political leverage; Johnny Bradshaw infiltrates Security. Alicia Wu rewarded, Orcas' influence expands subtly.

- 81 Ending 2 (Clubs Victory): Johnny publicly executed; Orcas' dominance enforced through fear. Rocco's leadership reputation enhanced, Security on alert.
- 82 Ending 3 (Phantom Compromise): Johnny publicly dead, secretly alive and puppet-controlled by Granddaddy. Drifter highly rewarded; Orcas secure covert political dominance.
- 83 Wildcard Ending: Both Security and the Orcas are weakened by external faction involvement (NCR or Red Leafs), leading to a political power vacuum the player can exploit.
- 90 Quest Complete – Return to Alicia Wu, Rocco, or Granddaddy for rewards and final reputation adjustments.
- 91 Quest Failed – Johnny Bradshaw escapes independently, exposes Orcas publicly, destabilizing Orcas' operations significantly, leading to internal chaos and external faction hostility.