

Author's Note: Written for the [QUOTEME #2: 2016](#) challenge on [LiveJournal's Section VII](#) community.



No more duty can be urged upon those who are entering the great theater of life than simple loyalty to their best convictions.

Edwin Hubbel Chapin

THE COURAGE OF HIS CONVICTIONS

BY [LAH](#)

May 1954
Grand-View-on-Hudson, NY

Franklin Milbourne – former U.S Minister to Canada, former U.S. Ambassador to Italy, former U.S. Ambassador to Canada, former U.S. Ambassador to Greece and now retired diplomat extraordinaire – ruminatively studied the countenance and posture of his grandson, Napoleon Solo. Franklin had been legal guardian to this young man since his birth, and thus Napoleon had been brought up in many countries always within the supercharged atmosphere of the political arena. Therefore, it was true to say that Napoleon, at just twenty-one years of age, had experienced more of the world-at-large than most men even twice his age.

Accordingly, Franklin knew that the subject being broached now between his grandson and himself was not some fly-by-night impulse of an immature male seeking the thrill of adventure. Oh, there was no doubt Napoleon could be headstrong at times, but he wasn't rash in the way of most youth. He readily discerned the value of tact and compromise and had an especial knack for exercising both of these acknowledged assets.

"So," Franklin noted, having had sufficient time in the last few minutes to mull over what Napoleon had just revealed to him, "you have been accepted as a candidate for training as an enforcement agent in the United Network Command for Law and Enforcement."

"Yes sir," affirmed Napoleon respectfully for truly there was no one on earth the young Solo respected more than his maternal grandfather.

Franklin Milbourne, like most highly-placed government officials and unlike most of the general populace, was well familiar with U.N.C.L.E. He understood the organization's goals and appreciated its worldview. Yet he recognized as well the inherent difficulty and dangerousness of its chosen mission; particularly with regard to those it termed its enforcement agents. And Napoleon was his only grandchild, the only grandchild he would ever have.

"And you intend to enter their program this summer?" Franklin questioned.

"Yes sir, in July."

"Isn't that a bit soon after you graduate from Columbia?"

"I receive my Bachelor's Degree in a week, sir, as you know. That and my previous stint in the military provide me the proper credentials for entrance into the upcoming class of U.N.C.L.E.'s Survival School," the younger man stated unequivocally.

Napoleon had enlisted in the army when he had just turned eighteen and risen to the rank of Sergeant Major. He had served with honor in Korea, been rewarded with several medals of valor during his two-year term, and been tagged as an aide to Colonel Morgan of Army Intelligence. After his tour of duty, he had returned home to immediately seek a degree in Philosophy at prestigious Columbia University, completing a normal 4-year course of study in less than two years. There was no doubt he could achieve at breakneck speed, and in a way that was what worried his grandfather. Milbourne had absolutely no doubt his grandson would succeed in becoming a top-notch enforcement agent for U.N.C.L.E., but that particular life-calling wasn't the one he had himself imagined for the boy.

"I had hoped," Franklin began a bit pensively, definitely exposing more of his inner feelings than he was generally wont to do, "that perhaps a career in the diplomatic field might appeal to you."

Now it was Napoleon who turned a bit pensive. His small, somewhat sad smile unconsciously displayed the fact he fully understood the extent of his grandfather's disappointment in his personal choice, however mildly stated.

"Perhaps one day, sir," he thus allowed this avenue of possibility to remain, "but for the present I want more..." Napoleon hesitated, unsure his ever-disciplined grandfather would empathize with this final truth. "Well, to be frank, sir," he started again after taking a quick, reinforcing intake of air, "I want more action."

A little sideways smirk graced the usually stern features of Franklin Milbourne. The young were definitely young and must be allowed the small vagaries of youth while that youth remained to them.

“You want more action in order to feel directly involved in bringing to some kind of fruition the ideals in which you believe,” he elaborated on his grandson’s revelation. “That is not a bad thing, Napoleon. And I can identify with and accept the nature of that desire in you, even if I don’t share it.”

Napoleon exhaled, only just realizing he had been holding his breath since he had put into words this last facet of his decision to join U.N.C.L.E.

“Then you will support me in this?’ he nevertheless ventured to seek final confirmation of his grandfather’s approval.

“Indubitably,” pronounced Franklin with a wider and truer smile now. “I can ask nothing more, as you seek your own path, than that you take responsibility to always find the courage to adhere to your own personal convictions. It seems you are more than willing to do that, and thus I am proud of you, Napoleon. On this day as on all others in your life.”

Warmed to the very depths of his soul, Napoleon smiled back just as widely (if not even more so) at his guardian grandfather.

—THE END—

