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“I’m the consigliere. I advise. Nothing more.”

— Tom Hagen, *The Godfather* (1972)

Robert Duvall was born in San Diego into a household defined by discipline. His father was a career officer in the United States Navy who eventually rose to the rank of Rear Admiral. Like many military families, the Duvalls moved frequently during his childhood, following assignments around the country.

It was the sort of upbringing that instilled structure and responsibility. Expectations were clear. Duty mattered.

Duvall also inherited something else. His mother had a love for theater, and somewhere between the discipline of his father and the creative influence of his mother, he developed a meticulous approach to acting.

In the mid-1950s, after graduating from Principia College and serving two years in the U.S. Army, Duvall moved to New York to study acting at the Neighborhood Playhouse. The early years were far from glamorous. He took odd jobs to pay rent and shared small apartments with other struggling young actors. Two of those roommates would eventually become legends themselves: Dustin Hoffman and Gene Hackman.

Duvall’s first notable film appearance came in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962), where he played the mysterious Boo Radley. It was a quiet role with very little dialogue, but it was a start. Over the next decade he steadily built a reputation as one of the most dependable character actors in film. Then, a turning point in 1972, director Francis Ford Coppola began casting a film adaptation of Mario Puzo’s novel *The Godfather*. Duvall originally auditioned for the role of Michael Corleone. That part would be played by Al Pacino, but Coppola saw a reserved confidence in Duvall that made him ideal for a different role.

Over the next several decades Duvall built one of the most remarkable careers in American film.

In *Apocalypse Now* (1979), he played the unforgettable Lt. Colonel Kilgore, delivering one of the most famous lines in movie history, “I love the smell of napalm in the morning.” He won the Academy Award for Best Actor for his performance as a quiet country singer rebuilding his life in *Tender Mercies* (1983).

Television audiences saw him again in one of his most beloved roles as Augustus “Gus” McCrae in *Lonesome Dove* (1989), a character whose humor and wisdom made the series a classic.

Maybe his finest monologue came in *Secondhand Lions*, where Duvall stars alongside Michael Caine. They play a pair of aging adventurers whose stories blur the line between myth and reality. When a younger man in a bar challenges him, Duvall as Hub McCann replies: “I’m Hub McCann. I’ve fought in two world wars and countless smaller ones on three continents. I’ve led thousands of men into battle with everything from horses and swords to artillery and tanks. I’ve seen the headwaters of the Nile and tribes of natives no white man had ever seen before. I’ve won and lost a dozen fortunes, killed many men, and loved only one woman with a passion a flea like you could never begin to understand. That’s who I am.”

Across more than six decades of work, Duvall became known for something specific in Hollywood. He rarely seemed to be acting even to his fellow actors; he simply inhabited the character. No drama, just focused, disciplined work.

That is the exact thing that Coppola saw in him and why he felt Duvall was perfect for the role of Tom Hagen, the Corleone family’s consigliere, a word that loosely translates from Italian as counselor or trusted advisor.

Popular culture often associates the role with organized crime, but the idea itself is much older and far more universal. Historically, powerful families relied on a trusted counselor whose job was not to lead or command, but to provide perspective when emotions ran high and decisions carried long-term consequences.

The consigliere wasn't the loudest person in the room. They weren't issuing orders. Listen carefully. Understand the full picture. Think clearly and without emotion. Help others see the long-term implications of the moment in front of them.

I am no Robert Duvall, or Tom Hagen for that matter, but I do believe there is something worthwhile in that role.

For the families who have entrusted me with their financial lives, that is how I hope I serve.

Not by being the loudest voice in the room. Not by reacting to every headline or pretending to predict every turn in the market. Not by making every decision for you. By Offering perspective when it's needed most. Helping you stay grounded when things feel uncertain. Keeping the focus on what matters over the long term.

At my best, that is the role. A steady hand. A calm voice. An advisor you can trust.

That may not make for the most dramatic part in the story. But in real life—and especially in the lives of families, it is often one of the most important.

Robert Selden Duvall

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