

On Father's Day: Poor Alphonse

By [Philip A Farruggio](#)

Global Research, June 18, 2018

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

He was my dad, and he most likely never had a chance for a better life. He was born in 1915 to a Sicilian father and Neapolitan mother, both immigrants. When Alphonse was ten, he lost all his teeth from gum disease. Then, at seventeen, at the onset of the Great Depression, he was able to get into Brooklyn College, a school that required top grades for enrollment. A year into his college career, the torment of the depression forced his parents to close their candy store. In order to make ends meet, Mom and Dad, and yes Alphonse, had to go out and find jobs. He dropped out of college and found a menial job, much to the chagrin of the dean, who saw a great future for young Alphonse. A shitty job, but that extra money coming in would mean lunch for the family would not just be banana or Broccoli Rabe sandwiches.

His dad Peter, a proud and highly intelligent man, who actually graduated college in Tunisia, found work as a machinist, and Alphonse's mom found work in a factory. Peter got involved with the union, and by the late 1930s was going out on strike. The times were becoming rougher and the NYC cops were always there to protect the owners, not the workers. Violence was in the air. One day Alphonse got a phone call that his dad was in jail, arrested during a labor scuffle. The bail was too high for them to get Peter out. So, Alphonse and his mother went around to everyone and anyone they knew, literally begging for help. Finally, they had enough and got Peter out. The caveat to all this was that Peter was told he would never get a job in that trade again.. ever! Alphonse and his mom kept working, and Peter kept looking for work... any kind of work. He tried to get on *Relief*, the precursor to today's welfare, but the waiting list was too long. It seemed that things were not working well for the family. One day, December 1st 1940, Alphonse's mom came home from her factory job to find the 'love of her life' lying in their bathtub... dead from a gunshot to his head. He was thoughtful even in suicide to make sure that he did it in the tub, not wishing to bloody up the floor.

Alphonse got drafted a year and a half later, and was sent to the Tank Corps in Texas. Before he was to be shipped out the Army released him as the 'Sole supporting son' . He returned home and found a job at the Brooklyn Navy Yard for the remainder of the war. He made friends with a fellow named Amos, and after the war they decided to go into the used car business. Alphonse was good at choosing cars, and Amos was a natural as the fast talking salesman. Things were good. Alphonse had married his childhood sweetheart by then, and had two sons... this writer being the newest arrival. The 'wheel of fate' rotated once again in the early 1950s when Amos took out a bank loan and forged Alphonse's name as cosigner. When he could not repay the loan, they came after Alphonse... and before long he had to declare personal bankruptcy. He lost the car lot and wound up getting a job on the docks as a longshoreman.

Yes, other men had it much worse. But other men were not my father. He never once stopped loving me his entire life. He was *always* there for myself and my older brother...

always! May his spirit enjoy the joy and happiness on the other side of this dream called life... the joy and happiness that only came in spurts for dear Alphonse.

*

Philip A Farruggio is a son and grandson of Brooklyn, NYC longshoremen. He has been a freelance columnist since 2001, with over 300 of his work posted on sites like Consortium News, Information Clearing House, Global Research, Nation of Change, World News Trust, Op Ed News, Dissident Voice, Counterpunch, Activist Post, Sleuth Journal, Truthout and many others. His blog can be read in full on World News Trust, whereupon he writes a great deal on the need to cut military spending drastically and send the savings back to save our cities. Philip has a internet interview show, 'It's the Empire... Stupid' with producer Chuck Gregory, and can be reached at paf1222@bellsouth.net.

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Philip A Farruggio](#), Global Research, 2018

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Philip A
Farruggio](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca