



INSIDE MUTINY

The Role David Ramsey Never Forgot

D

avid Ramsey has spent much of his career playing heroes.

For many fans, he's best known as John Diggle, the loyal soldier-turned-vigilante who became one of the most beloved characters in the DC television universe. Over a career spanning more than three decades, Ramsey has appeared in hit series including *Dexter*, *Blue Bloods*, *Arrow*, *The Flash*, and *Superman & Lois*, while also building a successful career behind the camera as a television director.

But when Ramsey looks back on one of the projects that left the deepest impression on him, it isn't a superhero story.

"It was 1999, folks," he joked recently. "So it wasn't yesterday."

That project was *Mutiny*, the 1999 NBC television film directed by Kevin Hooks and produced by Morgan Freeman, which introduced the story of the Port Chicago Sailors to audiences across the country.

For Ramsey, who was still early in his career, the film became an unexpected lesson in the responsibility that comes with portraying real people.



"A lot of times actors get a job and sometimes they may not understand, particularly when you're younger, the importance and the weight of what you're really performing," he said.

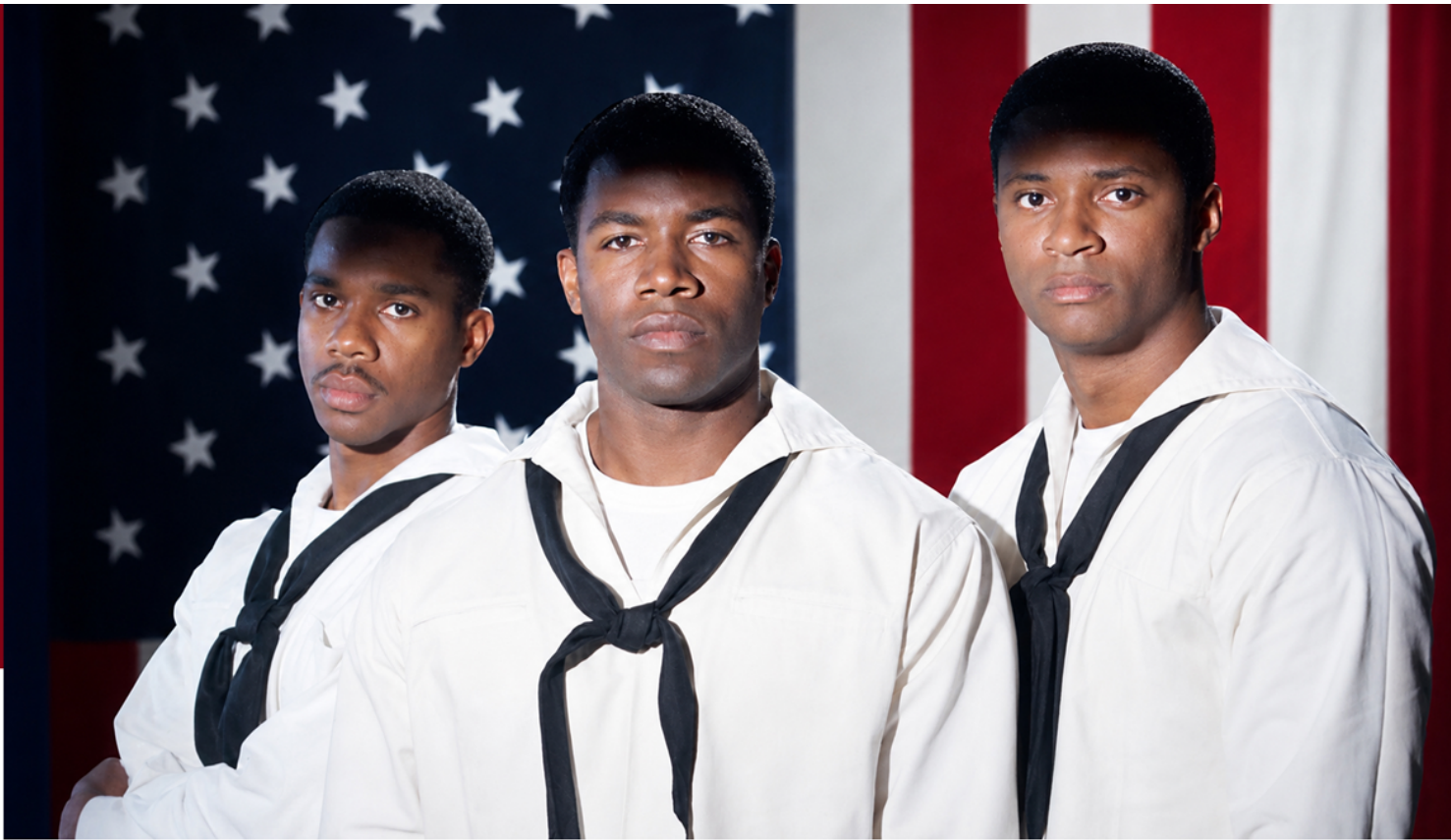
The cast was encouraged to learn as much as possible about the history and the men they were portraying.

"It was important that we did our research," Ramsey recalled. "And we did."

Mutiny dramatized the aftermath of the 1944 Port Chicago disaster, in which 320 men were killed in a catastrophic explosion at a Navy ammunition depot. When hundreds of surviving Black Sailors protested orders to return to the same hazardous and discriminatory working conditions, fifty of those men were ultimately convicted of mutiny in one of the most controversial trials in U.S. Navy history.



Matthew Glave (left) and David Ramsey in *Mutiny*.



The filmmakers went to unusual lengths to immerse the cast in the world they were portraying. Before filming, the actors completed an intensive military-style boot camp. But in a deliberate nod to history, they received no training in loading munitions—mirroring the experience of the young Sailors themselves, who were assigned to dangerous ammunition duty with little preparation.

The experience stayed with Ramsey long after filming wrapped. In the years since *Mutiny* aired, he says he's been struck by how many people still know little about the story behind the film.

"I've talked to people about what it was like to be in the TV movie," he said, "but also what it was like to celebrate these men's lives. It was surprising to me how many people didn't quite get and understand how these Sailors' actions of not returning to these deplorable working conditions and the subsequent 'mutiny,' if you will, directly led to the desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces."



That realization only deepened his admiration for the Sailors whose story the film sought to tell. "We owe these men our highest honors, our highest gratitude, our highest respect," Ramsey said. "In my opinion, they're not celebrated enough."

Looking back now, he even pokes a little fun at the film's age.

"It's a little dated," he admitted with a smile. "Like I said, it is 1999."

But he hopes audiences can still see what mattered most.

"Hopefully we captured the spirit and the bravery of these great Americans."

More than 25 years after *Mutiny* first aired—and following the 2024 exoneration of the Port Chicago 50—Ramsey's reflections serve as a reminder that some roles stay with an actor long after the cameras stop rolling. For him, *Mutiny* wasn't just another credit on a résumé. It was a chance to help tell a remarkable American story that still deserves a wider audience. ◀