

A close-up portrait of actor David Shields. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a thoughtful expression. His right hand is resting against his cheek. He has short, dark hair and a light beard. He is wearing a light-colored, possibly beige or tan, jacket over a white collared shirt. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

Views

David Shields.

Photography by Lee Malone

On the cover

Credits.

Talent. David Shields
Interview. Vanesa Miraglia
Photography. Lee Malone

Special Thanks.

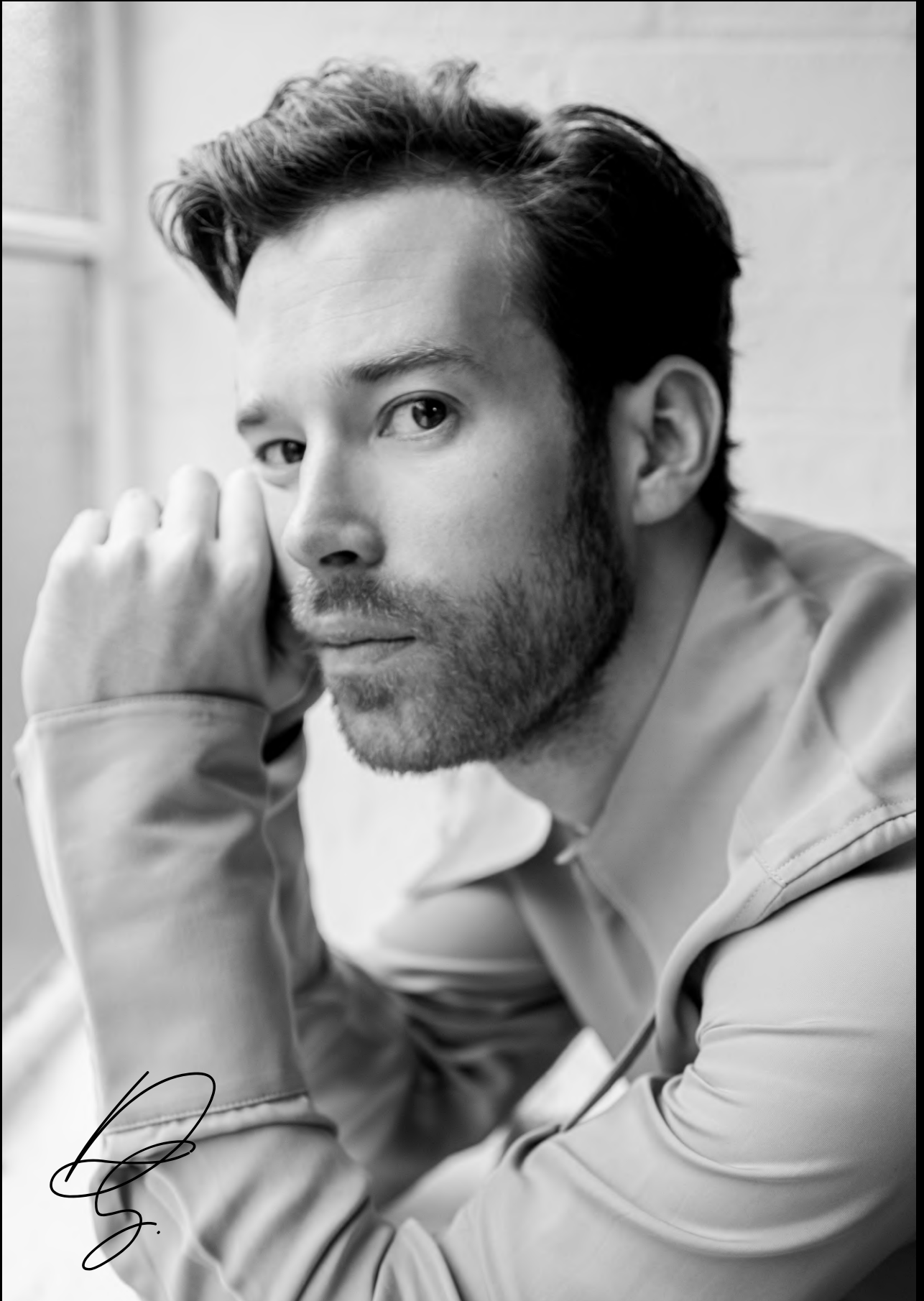
Telescope Agency

Staff.

Vanesa Miraglia

Get in touch with us.

van@viewties.co.uk





David Shields.

From a summer course igniting a spark to soaring through the skies as Major Everett Blakely, David Shields's path in acting is paved with passion and a playful spirit. Today, we delve into the cosmos of his artistic journey, exploring the moments that shaped him, the characters he inhabits, and the joy of "play" that fuels his craft.

We'll chart his course from early inspirations to landing his dream role in "Masters of the Air," dissecting the preparation and dedication that bring his characters to life. Along the way, we'll uncover the human layers beneath the stoic Major Blakely, discover how Shields finds humor in unexpected places, and explore how collaborating with fellow actors fuels his artistic growth.

This conversation is a tribute to the power of passion, a celebration of the childlike wonder that keeps actors soaring, and a glimpse into the mind of a talent on the rise.



V: Can you share with us when and how you realized that acting was more than just a job for you? What drew you to this art form and how has it shaped your identity over the years?

DS: I remember doing a summer course at Guildhall when I was 18. It was the first time that I really received any proper training, and after that I became consumed by it, and realised it was the only thing I wanted to do. And I suppose you could give the same answer to both questions. I think actors choose to retain some childlike qualities - they want to continue to 'play' long after other people have grown out of it. I think that's why so many are drawn to it, and probably what also makes them so intolerable to non-actors when they're all together!

V: What were the films or performances that left a lasting impression on you when you were growing up?

DS: I think it was watching *The Matrix* that I first understood the scope of film. Without being aware of the philosophy behind it, I had a vague sense of its depth and message, and remember thinking how impressive it was that that could be accomplished within an action movie. And in terms of acting, I remember watching *This is England* and thinking oh wow, acting can be like that? The cast were just so natural and effortless. So those two probably.

V: What was the process like to get the part in 'Masters of the Air'?

DS: I had known about the project for a year previous and had been pestering my agents about it. I remember I was on holiday in Wales when I got the self-tape. I cut short the trip, drove back to London, got a military haircut, bought all the costume and props, and prepped it probably harder than any tape I've ever done. Luckily it all paid off.

V: From watching the trailer it's a very ambitious series. What was life on set like with such a big ensemble cast? Had you met any of the cast before you came onto the project?

DS: The cast was so massive it almost felt at times like a huge theatre production. Like an Olympic opening ceremony or something. I had met Anthony Boyle a few times and Matt Gavan, and then there were others who were friends but who I didn't share scenes with like Barney White and Sam Gittins, but other than those no.

V: Taking on the role of 'Major Everett Blakely' in 'Masters of the Air,' can you describe what your character is like and how he fits into the group? How do we first meet him?

DS: He's an ultra-disciplined and well-respected pilot in the group. Harry Crosby describes him as 'The most G.I. of G.I.'s' in his book *A Wing and a Prayer*. But he also knows how to have a good time, and that's how you first meet him, in the opening scene, downing a shot of liquor.

V: What aspects of his character resonated with you the most? Did you do much training (military/combat) before filming began?

DS: Well probably more the having-a-good-time aspect than the piloting skills, but I tried my best to work on those through the boot-camp lectures, and through hours spent in the simulator learning how to start the plane, take a heading, where the altimeter is, the flight speed dial, how to trim etc.

V: Had you seen 'Band of Brothers' and 'The Pacific' before you started filming 'Masters of the Air'?

DS: Of course, *Band of Brothers* especially; it's my favourite limited series of all time and probably the show I've watched the most times on repeat. And so when we heard about *Masters* being made, my friends and I were gunning for it 12 months in advance of casting.

V: You also appeared in 'Black Mirror' alongside Paapa Essiedu last year. Were you a fan of the show before you were cast in 'Demon 79'?

DS: A hundred percent. It's a unique show with such a strong pedigree of story-writing and talent.

V: You played a very unlikeable politician 'Michael Smart'. Did you draw inspiration from any real-life public figures before filming began? How did you prepare to play the character?

DS: I did, I met with an ex-MP from the period who gave me a few pointers. And then I stole different aspects from different politicians. So you'll see a bit of Powell, hear a bit Hague etc. I wanted to reflect the fact that back in the 70's there was greater latitude given to rhetorical flair during political speeches, so I drew on those figures in terms of style as well as substance.

“

Actors choose to retain some childlike qualities – they want to continue to ‘play’ long after other people have grown out of it. I think that’s why so many are drawn to it, and probably what also makes them so intolerable to non-actors when they’re all together!

– DAVID SHIELDS

”

V: What kind of stories are you drawn to? What do you look for in a script?

DS: Honestly just anything with good writing. That sounds like a very vague answer but good writing in a project that’s actually going to get made is so rare. When you come across it, it tends to jump off the page at you. Other than that it’s just a character with depth and texture, or humour.

V: Is there anything you’ve seen recently (TV or film) that you really loved and wished you’d been in?

DS: I saw *Zone of Interest* recently.

I would love to film something like that with multiple cameras, where everywhere is mic’d up, and you can just roam around and work it out in the moment. That would be really fun.

V: What kind of work do you want to be doing next? Can you tell us about anything else you have coming out this year?

DS: I shot something in Amsterdam recently, but I don’t think I can speak about that yet. But I would love to do something either comedic, or weird and off-beat. Or both! Those are the kinds of characters I’m really craving at the moment.

Masters of the Air debuted on Apple TV+ with the first two episodes on 26th January. Fans can look forward to new episodes dropping every Friday until the conclusion of the nine-episode season.



Viewties

WWW.VIEWTIES.CO.UK

FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM

@viewtiesmag