



NEWS

CELEBS

TV

MOVIES

MUSIC

PHOTOS

CONTESTS



LIVE THE

'NCIS's' Rocky Carroll: One Of TV's Great Performers

March 11th, 2014 12:10pm EDT | By: Brittany Frederick Add to My News

Like 1

+1 0

Tweet 0

Share 1

1 of 2



[Rocky Carroll](#) has been a welcome presence in our homes since he joined the cast of CBS's medical drama *Chicago Hope* in 1998 as determined doctor Keith Wilkes. The year after that show ended, we fell in love with him all over again as CIA bureaucrat Carl Reese in the network's short-lived and underappreciated *The Agency*. Late next month, it'll be six years since he first appeared on [NCIS](#) as then-Assistant Director Leon Vance, a role he's also played on *NCIS: Los Angeles* and *Hawaii Five-0*. BFTV sat down with Rocky last week to discuss his tenure as Vance and the longevity of *NCIS*.

"When I started out with this show, people were kind of indifferent about him," the actor reflected. "I didn't really know what to expect. A lot of it would have to do with the chemistry between my character and Mark Harmon's character [Gibbs]. It was such an interesting and such a different dynamic. It was something so different from the character of the director that was played by Lauren Holly before me. People reacted strongly to it at the beginning and now they kind of anticipate it. It's kind of been woven into the fabric of the show.

"What I love now is, I'm not in every episode. I can be in as few as seven episodes or as many as about thirteen or fourteen. And if I'm not in an episode, I'll go on my Twitter feed and the first thing is, 'Where's Vance?'"

It's pretty easy to see why Vance has caught on. Aside from the interplay that exists between former *Chicago Hope* colleagues Rocky and Mark, the character has proven to be much more than the prototypical supervisor. Sometimes he and the NCIS team work well together; other times, he's the dissenting voice. He's ultimately a good guy, but you still never quite know how he might come down in any given situation.

We've also gotten to know him beyond his capacity as agency director, most notably in season ten, which involved the shooting death of Vance's wife Jackie. That's the kind of storyline material that makes or breaks a character, and it was deftly handled by Rocky, who has been able to make the audience see Vance as his own man, and not just a foil for the unit he supervises.

But how much longer will he be in charge? *NCIS* has been on the air for more than a decade, meaning that Rocky's character has a tenure longer than some entire series have run. Especially given that his predecessor was killed off, we asked him if he ever considers how much more he'll get to do with Vance. "I think it's kind of natural to think that," he told us. "We're in sort of uncharted territory, especially in the world and the age we live in now. A successful series is five seasons. We're an anomaly. We're apart from the norm.

"When I was a kid growing up, there might be 10 shows on the air that had been on for ten seasons or eleven seasons. *Gunsmoke* ran for over twenty years," he continued. "We're in a very unique situation, and of course you can't help but look around and think to yourself, 'I wonder how much longer this is going to last.' But never have I heard of a show that actually gained momentum as it got older. This show in seasons five and six did well, but it's actually better in ratings now than in its first five years."



NEWS

CELEBS

TV

MOVIES

MUSIC

PHOTOS

CONTESTS

A NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR MORE BENEFITS TO LONDON FROM LA.



'NCIS's' Rocky Carroll: One Of TV's Great Performers

Next Article

March 11th, 2014 12:10pm EDT |



By: Brittany Frederick



Add to My News

Like 1

+1 0

Tweet 0

Share 1

Prev 2 of 2



Rocky also portrayed an authority figure in CBS's short-lived but impressive spy drama *The Agency*, as Carl Reese, who helped CIA directors Alex Pierce (Ronny Cox) and Tom Gage (Beau Bridges) execute and manage agency operations. With a formidable cast that also included Gloria Reuben (*ER*), Jason O'Mara (*The Good Wife*) and Will Patton (*Falling Skies*), *The Agency* was an effective blend of spy thriller and political potboiler that never got the credit it deserved - principally because it wound up being unintentionally topical.

"*The Agency* happened right after the September 11 attacks. That show was introduced sort of in the aftermath of the attacks," Rocky explained. "We were playing a government agency that was dealing with matters of national security on a regular basis, when government agencies were dealing with matters of national security in the real world. When people wanted entertainment, I think the last thing they wanted to see was a fictionalized version of what was really going on in real life. I think we just kind of fell victim to the fact that we were art imitating life."

Unfortunately, *The Agency* is one of those shows that's disappeared into TV history; aside from a DVD release in the United Kingdom that's now out of print, you won't be able to find it. But it's not surprising that most people don't remember it. As Rocky explained, with the breakneck pace of producing a TV series, it's even hard sometimes for an actor to recall what you were doing yesterday, let alone that show you were in a decade ago.

"We shoot episode on top of an episode [on *NCIS*]. The day we finish an episode, we're going into a new one. It's almost imperative that we forget what we just did, because we move on," he told us. "The fact that we go from shooting the last scene of episode 220 to taking lunch and starting episode 221, your brain doesn't process it anymore. Sometimes when I meet people or when I do an interview and people bring up something, I'm reminded that I did do something or I was a part of that."

He's built an impressive career that has spanned just about everything at this point. There have been the massive feature films, like a role in *Crimson Tide* alongside Denzel Washington and Gene Hackman. A Tony nomination for the Broadway production of August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson*. And of course, the lengthy relationship he's built with us through his continued presence on the small screen, as that mainstay we can always count on.

"I kind of pat myself on the back that people can't associate me with one thing," he said. "My relationship with CBS has now spanned twenty years. *Chicago Hope* was twenty years ago, when I did that series. My first venture into TV was a half-hour sitcom on Fox called *Roc*. I went from a sitcom to a hospital drama, feature films. I've kind of been living the actor's dream. I'm not associated with one role or one medium. You're lucky if you're associated with one hit show."

Now he's an integral part of the most watched series on TV. And having welcomed him into our homes consistently for more than two decades, having enjoyed him in roles from the hotshot doctor to CIA boss and now *NCIS* director, we're more than thrilled to see him there.

NCIS continues its eleventh season tonight at 8 PM ET/PT on CBS. For more on Rocky, you can follow him on Twitter ([@RockyCOfficial](#)).

(c)2014 [Brittany Frederick](#). Appears at Starpulse with permission. All rights reserved. No reproduction permitted. Visit [my official website](#) and follow me on Twitter at [@tvbrittanfy](#).