

## John Brown Star Bio

John Brown was another brit that emigrated to the U.S. to become one of our greatest, most prolific character actors--on the Stage, in Film, on Radio and on Television. Although details on his early years are somewhat sparse, it's clear that he began his Radio career in the U.S. in 1932. From that point on, and for the rest of his relatively short life, John Brown became a Radio legend for the next 25 years.

His most memorable performances were as Irma's shiftless boyfriend in *My Friend Irma* (1947), as 'Broadway' in Mayfair Productions' syndicated *The Damon Runyon Theatre* (1948), and as Chester Riley's long-suffering next door neighbor, Gillis, in *The Life of Riley* (1944). Brown was also heard as *Digby "Digger" O'Dell*, "the friendly undertaker" on Radio's *The Life of Riley*.

A gifted American dialectician, especially considering his British roots, John Brown was one of Radio's hardest working voices. His uncanny Radio depictions ranged from a bewildering array of ethnic New Yorkers to cowboys and British aristocrats. As adept at straight dramatic roles as comedy and suspense, John Brown's skills behind the mike became a staple of American Radio from Coast to Coast.

Brown's transition to a Television career was equally successful, contributing to many of Television's earliest comedy successes. He was the first *Harry Morton* on TV's *George Burns and Gracie Allen Program* for Carnation (1949), a regular on Television's *Life of Riley* (1949) reprising his 'Digger' O'Dell character from the Radio program, and made frequent appearances on *I Love Lucy* (1951).

Brown also appeared in Film, beginning with an uncredited role in 1944's *Casanova Brown*, then appearing in several more uncredited roles in American and British films, before his first Film credit in *Three Desperate Men* (1951). Alfred Hitchcock then tapped him for a role in *Strangers on a Train* (1951). Brown was also seen in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951) as George Barley. After two years in other uncredited roles and some voice-over work, Brown found himself rounding out his Film career in 1953's critically acclaimed cult film, *The Wild One*, as *Bill Hamegan*.

With a continuing busy career in Radio, John Brown continued recurring roles in Radio's *The George Burns and Gracie Allen Show* (1951), *The Bickersons* (1951), and various roles in *Mr. President* (1953). With a promising career looming in Film and Television, Brown's life was tragically ended with a massive heart attack. Brown had just turned 53.

John Brown's body of work throughout the Golden Age of Radio is remembered as some of the most diverse, talented and well-timed performances in Radio History. Brown's range was truly extraordinary and the singular characters that he brought to life over the years are remembered by some of Radio's most dedicated fans.

We count ourselves among them.

Information for this star bio came from [www.digitaldeli.com](http://www.digitaldeli.com)

For The Old Time Radio Researchers, I'm \_\_\_\_\_, your announcer.