

Raymond Burr

Biography



Born as Raymond 'William Stacy' Burr, 21 May 1917, in New Westminster, British Columbia, Burr spent most of his early life travelling.

While still young, his father moved his family to China, where the elder Burr worked as a trade agent. When the family returned to Canada, Raymond's parents divorced; his mother then took him to Vallejo, California, where she raised him with the aid of his grandparents. As he got older, Burr began to take jobs to support his mother, younger sister and younger brother. He took jobs as a ranch hand in Roswell, New Mexico; as a deputy sheriff; a photo salesman; and even as a singer in night clubs.

In World War II, Burr served in the Navy. When in Okinawa, he was shot in the stomach and sent home. In 1946, Burr made his film debut in *San Quentin*. He went on to act in more than 90 films before landing the role of defense attorney "Perry Mason" (1957) in the series of the same name. Over the course of the series, which became the longest running lawyer show in American television history at the time, Burr became the highest paid actor on television. He later starred as wheelchair-bound chief of police Robert Ironside in *Ironside*, another long-running and widely-watched television series, from 1967 to 1975. Burr directed two episodes of *Ironside* in 1972 (*Achilles' Heel* and *Nightmare Trip*).

Though diagnosed with kidney cancer in 1992, Burr found time to film one last *Perry Mason* episode and made an extended trip to Europe before his death. Burr died on 12 September 1993 at the age of 76; at his ranch home.

A memorial service was held at the Pasadena Playhouse on 1 October 1993, where he made his acting debut 50 years before. A director's chair with his name on it was placed at the centre of the stage, around which friends paid their tribute.