

Stage, Screen Actor Jack Cassidy Believed To Be Victim Of Fire

Los Angeles (AP) — Jack Cassidy, whose varied entertainment career took him from Broadway musicals to film and television roles, was feared dead yesterday after flames engulfed his penthouse apartment, firemen said.

A badly burned body was found in the apartment. A coroner's spokesman said no official identification would be made until today, but authorities said there was evidence that the victim was Cassidy.

"They found the wallet with identification in it, and the identification was that of Cassidy," said a sheriff's department spokesman.

A FIRE CAPTAIN who was at the scene of the early morning West Hollywood blaze said the wallet was "full of credit cards."

Cassidy's agent, Rowland Perkins, said jewelry belonging to Cassidy was found on the body.

"Someone identified some jewelry on the body as his, and I know his business manager has resigned himself to the fact that it was Cassidy," Perkins said.

The body was discovered in a room of the fourth-floor apartment early yesterday. Investigators said the scene was littered with cigarette butts apparently left from a Saturday night party.

"We don't know for sure that it was Cassidy, but we are assuming it was him," said Rod Smith, a county fire battalion chief. "There was a person burned to death in his apartment, and his wallet was found in a different room."

CASSIDY, 49, A SINGER, comedian and dramatic actor best known for his television appearances, is the father of rock singer David Cassidy, star of the former Partridge Family television series.



ACTOR JACK CASSIDY
Believed Dead In Fire

Cassidy was formerly married to actress Shirley Jones, although David is the offspring of his previous marriage to actress Evelyn Ward.

One of Cassidy's last roles was the portrayal of John Barrymore in the film "W.C. Fields and Me."

In 1964, the actor won a Tony Award for his Broadway performance in "She Loves Me."

Television specials to his credit include "The Andersonville Trial," "The Boston Spy Party," "High Button Shoes," and "George M!"

HE MADE HIS Broadway debut at age 16 in Mike Todd's "Something for the Boys," and went on to perform and star in many other musicals before moving into television and feature films.

Smith said the suave actor with the dimpled smile was known to be a heavy smoker, adding that a smoldering cigarette may have sparked the blaze.

No other injuries were reported in the fire, which forced the evacuation of about 100 residents of the 33-unit apartment complex.

"There is no indication anyone else lived there," Smith said. "It was only his penthouse apartment that was burned."