

Blaze Which Killed Cassidy Believed Caused By Cigarette

Hollywood (UPI) — The fire that caused the death of actor Jack Cassidy probably was started by a cigarette, firemen said yesterday.

The 49-year-old singer-dancer-actor's body, charred beyond recognition, was discovered by fire fighters Sunday in his apartment overlooking the Sunset Strip.

A spokesman for the Los Angeles Fire Department said its arson squad was investigating the blaze, which did an estimated \$100,000 damage to the apartment structure Cassidy owned.

THE BLAZE started in the 33-unit building at dawn Sunday morning, sending some 100 tenants into the street. The fire, however, was restricted to Cassidy's apartment.

Friends and relatives of Cassidy spent almost all day Sunday awaiting word whether the body was, in fact, that of the genial, blond performer who is the father of pop singer David Cassidy and former husband of actress Shirley Jones.

The fact that Cassidy's automobile was not parked in its customary area gave hope to the actor's friends that the body was not his. Personal jewelry found on the body, however, and his

wallet, found near a pull-out sofa in the living room, were early clues that the victim was Cassidy.

Many hours after the body was discovered, positive identification was made through dental records by the Los Angeles County Coroner's office.

CASSIDY, A native of the Richmond Hill section of the Queens borough of New York City, made his professional acting debut at 16 on Broadway in Mike Todd's "Something For the Boys."

A versatile performer, Cassidy appeared in movies, television, the theater and nightclubs. He was nominated for an Emmy for his performance in "The Andersonville Trial."

In addition to son David, Cassidy is survived by his three sons from his marriage to Miss Jones — Shaun, Patrick and Ryan.

Miss Jones, shocked and in tears, said, "I'm very sad. What other reaction can anyone have? We were very close."

A spokesman said a nonsectarian memorial service will be conducted tomorrow at Pierce Bros. Chapel in Beverly Hills, followed by cremation. The ashes will be scattered at sea.