

## DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE

Case Report. Case No. H-25-Y Station No. 194

Number of Pages 1-1

Time State of Connecticut Windsor  
County of Hartford S.S. July 22nd, 1944  
1:50 PM.

Statement of Albert R. Lawrence.

My name is Albert Lawrence. I am 42 years of age, reside at 113 Maple Ave., Windsor, Conn. I am married to Selma Josephson and have one daughter Diane, who is 12 years of age.

On the afternoon of July 6th, I attended the Ringling Bros Circus in Hartford. I was accompanied by my daughter Diane. We sat in Sec. "B", row 6, seats 8 and 9.

From our seats, I could see the animal runway, located at the west end of the tent. I saw animals come through it into the exhibition cage and leave the same way. I couldn't say whether or not it entered the tent through an exit.

When the animal act was concluded and the trainer, a lady, was in the process of getting the last two or three animals out of the performance cage, I heard a commotion down in front of the stand, to my left. I thought at the moment that a gang fight was in progress. Then I thought probably the bleachers had collapsed. At this point, I turned slightly to my left and observed a flame covering about a six foot space at the junction where the roof meets the side canvas. I believe part of the side canvas was burning at that point. I stood up by my chair and grabbed my daughter so she wouldn't get away from me. After getting my bearings, I proceeded over to the aisle to my left, then down to the grand-stand entrance of Sec. "B". There was a few people at the entrance at the time, so I waited a second or two before proceeding onto the track. Then I took my daughter by the arm and ran as fast as I could out the main entrance. L.J. Mercier #97

Officer

State Police

(OVER)

Lawrence, Albert

I might add that on my way out, I observed a section of the side canvas behind the bleachers on fire. It appeared as though the burning area covered about two feet and extended from the ground up to the beginning of the roof.

When we finally reached the clearing out side of the tent, there was a congregation of people, who were in a high state of emotion, milling around talking to one another.

We then started out to Barbour St. and after crossing it, followed the crowd in a westerly direction through back yards to a street running apallel with Barbour. Then we walked to my car on Risley St. and drove to my home in Windsor.

My daughter Diane sustained a second degree burn on her left arm, between the sholder and elbo. She had first degree burns about the forehead, right arm and both hands. I received first and second degree burns on top of my head. Also first degree burns on my hands.

Just before the show started, I left the grand stand and went to the mens toilet by the main entrance. When I entered a man was coming out, but no one was inside. A teen aged boy followed me into the toilet. and made mention of the weather being hot. Everything appeard to be in order, no papers on the ground and etc.

At no time was I in a position to observe whether or not there was water buckets under the grand stand or bleachers. Nor did I see circus employees there.

I have stated all I know about the fire.

I have read the above statement. It is true and correct.

Witness:

Signed:

Ofcr. Lester J. Mercier #97

Albert R. Lawrence.