

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE  
HARTFORD, CONN.

June 6, 1950

H-25-2 - 2 -

TO Commissioner Edward J. Hickey  
FROM Captain Paul Lavin  
SUBJECT: **H-25-Z Ringling Bros., Barnum & Bailey  
Circus Fire**

June 6----- 1950

Dear Commissioner:

On May 29, 1950, at 7:03 P.M., while at my home, I received a telephone call from one Sergeant Joseph V. Seryak, Ohio State Highway Patrol Headquarters, located at 1117 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio, who gave me the following information:

That in the afternoon of this date, Chief C. R. LaMonda of the Arson Bureau, Ohio State Fire Marshal's Office, made an appearance at the State Highway Patrol Headquarters with Robert Segee and made a request to have him fingerprinted and mugged at their headquarters. This request was granted, and while Sergeant Seryak was in conversation with Chief LaMonda, he made a point in questioning him relative to what information Segee was giving them.

Chief LaMonda informed Sergeant Seryak that Dr. Higle was making progress with the Accused Segee through the examination and stated that he was well satisfied with the tests that had been made. He further stated that the tests might extend longer than the anticipated time, with an additional ten days added to the approximate time given us while there. Sergeant Seryak further stated that Chief LaMonda forwarded him information relative to some fires in Portland, Maine, and Dover, New Hampshire, but did not go into detail relative to the fires.

At this time Sergeant Seryak requested of Chief LaMonda to question Segee while he was at the State Highway Patrol Headquarters, and was refused flatly in this matter. Later on in the afternoon R. Russell Smith, an investigator in Chief LaMonda's Division, appeared at Headquarters looking for Chief LaMonda and informed Sergeant Seryak that he wanted a rush job done on the pictures, with a sufficient number of pictures for him to take east. It was stated by Smith that he was leaving Ohio for the east, as Seryak put it, that night, to investigate and get a better background of the Accused Segee. While Seryak was in conversation with Smith, Smith furnished the information that "a circus fire started in the toilet section in Hartford, Connecticut," and stated that "everything on the investigation of Segee was blowing fine on the Hartford fire case, and that "It looked better," and in his statement stated "There was a good chance of breaking

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same." Sergeant Seryak further informed me that Mr. Cook, the representative from the Underwriters Fire of New York, had left Columbus, Ohio, Wednesday, May 24, for New York City, and to the best of his information was either to furnish information to the Underwriters Agency or request a leave of absence so that he could secure the Public Safety position he is now looking for in Columbus, Ohio.

This information was relayed to you via phone at 7:10 P.M., May 29, 1950.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Paul Lavin*

Paul Lavin  
Field Captain, Western District  
Base Station, Bethany

PL/acl

*P. Seryak*  
Capt. P. Seryak