

'Unsolved Mysteries'

NBC examines 9/24/94 Olson's death

By DAN BURNS
News-Post Staff

The suspicious circumstances surrounding the death of Fort Detrick germ warfare researcher Frank Olson, who died in a fall from a New York City hotel room 41 years ago, will be dramatized for a nationwide television audience Sunday evening.

Dr. Olson's death is to be featured on a segment of NBC's "Unsolved Mysteries," scheduled to air at 7 p.m. using actors to portray Dr. Olson and other people involved in his death.

The show suggests the scientist - who days before his death had been the unwitting victim of a Central Intelligence Agency experiment with the hallucinogen LSD - may have been killed to silence a suddenly agitated man who retained a library of highly sensitive military secrets in his head.

The 15-minute dramatization is peppered throughout with narratives and comments from Dr. Olson's two

sons, Eric and Nils, both of whom still live in Frederick.

The family has never accepted the official explanations for Dr. Olson's fall - first termed a suicide and later labeled accidental after it was revealed he and other government scientists had been surreptitiously given doses of LSD by CIA agents while attending a weekend conference at Deep Creek Lake in November 1953.

Dr. Olson was taken to New York by CIA agents after returning from the conference to meet with one of the few medical professionals then familiar with LSD, which was then a brand new drug about which little was known.

In the days before his death, according to his sons and other accounts, Dr. Olson is reported to have behaved erratically. The television broadcast portrays him acting paranoid and wandering the streets of New York mumbling to himself and tossing away all of his personal

(Continued on Page A-4)

Olson

(Continued from Page A-1)

identification.

He fell from his hotel room early on the morning he was to return home, on the Saturday after Thanksgiving.

Both sons firmly believe that the spy agency continues to withhold key evidence in the case - evidence they contend points to murder. They are hopeful that the show may prompt someone with crucial information to

step forward, Eric Olson said Friday.

In June, the Olsons had their father's body exhumed by a team of forensic experts. The scientists and criminologists are studying the body for evidence of foul play, and tissue and bone samples from Dr. Olson's cadaver are now under examination in labs from Oregon to Washington, D.C.

In the television show, the narrator says: "Preliminary findings paint a disturbing scenario."

Dr. James E. Starrs, the lead investigator, recaps on tape what he has said repeatedly since he began looking into the Olson case - that despite many curious inconsistencies with the official coroner's report, he has yet to uncover hard evidence that Dr. Olson was murdered.

But he tantalizes viewers by

hinting: "The evidence is mounting."

Dr. Starrs, whose previous exhumations and forensic investigations have been featured on the show, is attending a conference in Florida and could not be reached Friday.

Eric Olson said he has been told by Dr. Starrs that the investigator plans to release his final report on the case at the end of November, around the 41st anniversary of his father's death.