

# CIA role in LSD death is eyed

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Forty-one years ago a CIA researcher participating in a secret LSD experiment leaped to his death from the old Statler Hotel.

Yesterday, forensics experts in Washington said Frank Olson might have been pushed over the edge by the CIA.

Severe bruises on Olson's head suggest he may have been smashed on the head before he plunged 173 feet to the Manhattan sidewalk below, said James Starrs, a George Washington University professor.

And Dr. Jack Frost, deputy chief medical examiner of West Virginia who examined the exhumed body, said the swelling over Olson's left eye could not have happened as a result of the fall.

"It was smooth," Frost said. "If you hit concrete, you're going to see abrasions."

Olson's death in 1953 was ruled a suicide. Subsequent congressional probes failed to turn up

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evidence to the contrary.

But Starrs said yesterday: "I am exceedingly skeptical of the view that Dr. Olson went through that window on his own."

Starrs, who has conducted forensic investigations into the ax murders of Lizzie Borden's parents and the assassination of Louisiana Sen. Huey Long, also noted Olson's former CIA superior admitted shredding documents after Olson died — because he did not want them to be "misunderstood."

Olson was one of eight unwitting CIA-affiliated researchers who were given doses of LSD to test their reactions.

"The nonscientific aspects [of the case] are rankly and starkly suggestive of homicide," Starrs said.

"There's no other way I can read them."

The CIA yesterday said in a statement that it "will cooperate fully" if the case is reopened.

Starrs' team studied Olson's corpse using the latest video-imaging techniques and forensic methods — including a detailed analysis of a skeleton and a cast of Olson's skull.

Then-President Gerald Ford offered the Olson family an apology on behalf of the government in 1975 and made a monetary settlement.

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