

Olson sons to continue fight

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The sons of Dr. Frank Olson, a Fort Detrick biochemist who fell to his death 41 years ago just days after being drugged with LSD by U.S. intelligence operatives, are not giving up the fight to prove their father was murdered by government agents.

Dr. Olson's oldest son, Eric, a Frederick psychologist, said Tues-

day that he and his brother Nils, a local dentist, are working with a Washington attorney to recruit a high-profile law firm to continue the probe into their father's mysterious fall from a New York hotel room on the night after Thanksgiving 1953.

"We're definitely going forward," Eric Olson said. "We don't have a specific strategy at this point but we are definitely going on."

Eric Olson's comments came just 15 days after a team of forensic

investigators, who had exhumed Dr. Olson's remains from his grave in Frederick last June at the brothers' request, concluded they could find no "conclusive evidence" that the germ warfare researcher was murdered.

They noted a number of peculiar inconsistencies with the original coroner's report, however, and the team's lead investigator, Dr. James Starrs of The George Washington University National Law Center, said he is convinced by the limited scien-

to prove murder

tific evidence and an abundance of circumstantial evidence that Dr. Olson's death was a homicide, not the suicide or accident it is currently considered.

"You can't solve this thing from a scientific basis, that's the nature of the crime," Eric Olson said. "Starrs himself is convinced it's a homicide - convinced of exactly what I've believed for years."

Eric Olson, who is writing about his father's death as part of book on

which he is working about a method of psychotherapy called "collage," said it is now up to lawyers and private investigators to pick up where the scientists left off. "There's a lot to do in that regard."

"This thing is far from over. In fact, it's probably just beginning," he said.

He said new witnesses have come forward in recent months, most in

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the wake of the national publicity generated by the forensic investigation. He would not disclose what new evidence they have brought with them.

The Olsons created a stir this year when they decided to have their father's body exhumed from Linden Hills Cemetery in Frederick and studied by a team of scientists from around the country.

The brothers have never accepted the official explanations for the death of their father, a top civilian researcher in Fort Detrick's biological weapons development program.

Dr. Olson's fatal fall came just

nine days after he had been the unwitting subject of a CIA experiment with LSD while attending a secret conference at Deep Creek Lake.

The CIA had ample motive to want Dr. Olson, who retained a library of highly sensitive military secrets in his head, silenced in the name of national security, his sons contend.

In the days following the LSD experiment, the scientist, then 43, became agitated and told his superiors at Fort Detrick that he intended to quit his job.

Alarmed by his sudden change of demeanor, CIA officials, who were involved in overseeing his work at the Army base, whisked him away to New York for evaluation by an

allergist on retainer with the CIA who was considered one of the day's few authorities on LSD.

He never returned to Frederick.

Early on the morning he was scheduled to return home, Dr. Olson plunged from his hotel room 173 feet to the sidewalk below. His death was ruled a suicide.

His family found that explanation unbelievable, and their suspicions were confirmed, at least in part, 22 years later when a congressional investigation into the CIA's domestic activities revealed for the first time that Dr. Olson had been the subject of a secret government experiment. The cause of death was changed to accidental.

Eric Olson said he and his brother have not yet discussed plans to rebury their father now that the forensic examination is complete.

They plan to bury him next to their mother, Alice Wicks Olson, who died 15 months ago. She is buried at Mount Olivet Cemetery on South Market Street.