

Olson Knew of LSD Test, Ex-CIA Man Believes

New York Times News Service

NEW YORK — A former CIA employee has broken two decades of silence and now says he believes that a scientist who plunged from a Manhattan hotel window 22 years ago had knowingly participated in a CIA experiment with LSD before his death.

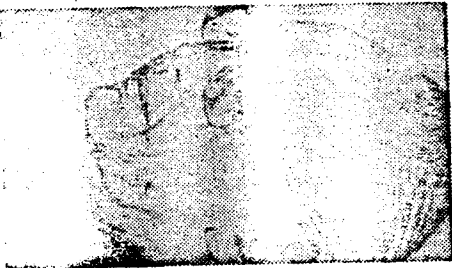
In a telephone interview yesterday, Robert Lashbrook, the CIA employee, described a meeting in November 1953 of four CIA employees and five others employed at Ft. Detrick, Md.

Lashbrook said it was his understanding that "actually everyone there had agreed in advance that such a test would be conducted and that they were willing to be one of the subjects." However, Lashbrook added that "the time was not specified."

IN ITS REPORT last month on improper activities by the CIA, the Rockefeller Commission said that the drug had been given to the scientist, Frank R. Olson, without his knowledge and that he jumped to his death.

Reached at his home in Orinda, Calif., James N. Roche, the lawyer who prepared the part of the Rockefeller Commission report dealing with the Olson case, refused to comment on Lashbrook's remarks.

In describing the LSD incident and the death, the Rockefeller Commission did not identify the scientist, but a colleague later told his widow and children that it was Olson and the



ROBERT LASHBROOK
Describes suicide

family has announced its intentions to sue the CIA for his "wrongful death."

Neither the family nor the police and medical examiner's officials who investigated the death had been aware of Olson's exposure to the potent mind-altering drug until the Rockefeller Commission's report was published last month.

IN ANOTHER DISCLOSURE on the intelligence agency's controversial LSD testing program, Rockefeller Commission sources identified Dr. Sidney Gottlieb, 57, a biochemist and chief of the program, as the man who personally ordered the destruction of all related records to hide details of possibly illegal actions.

These sources, who reported that Gottlieb was

personally involved in the testing that led to Olson's death, said 152 files were ordered destroyed in 1973, 20 years after the fatal incident and 10 years after the experiments had been reportedly halted.

The report also had reported the destruction of the records but did not mention Gottlieb by name.

In the interview from his home in Ojai, Calif., Lashbrook, who has a Ph.D. in chemistry and worked for the CIA for 12 years as a researcher, recalled attending the "technical meeting" in November 1953 with the three other CIA employees, Olson and five other employees of the Special Operations Division at Fort Detrick, Md., where the drug was reportedly given to four or five persons.

MEANWHILE, a retired Army commander, Maj. Gen. Lloyd Fellenz, was quoted as saying that over a three-year period in the late 1950s between 100 and 150 people were given LSD in a military experiment. The Associated Press reported that Fellenz said they were all volunteers.

Fellenz, who headed the Chemical Research and Development Laboratory at the Army's Edgewood Arsenal, noted he was slipped the mind-altering drug himself.

Lashbrook in the telephone interview said he was not personally present at the meeting in which "everyone agreed" to take part in a test with LSD but he said someone he felt was reliable had told him of the arrangement.

Lashbrook said that he himself had been asked if he would be a subject in the LSD tests during the meet-

ing and that he had reluctantly agreed. He said he had been a "guinea pig" on other times in LSD experiments and he said, "frankly, I didn't like it."

According to New York City police reports, Lashbrook was one of the two men who accompanied Olson to New York and he was sharing a room at the Statler Hotel with Olson when he went out the window.

LASHBROOK IDENTIFIED Olson's body at the Medical Examiner's Office and gave the police most of the information in their report. He did not mention the LSD experiment or his CIA affiliation with any of the officials.

Lashbrook said in the interview that lasted for more than an hour that the

police "wouldn't have known about" LSD and that the "question never came up" in what he said was a brief talk with an official at the medical examiner's office. The CIA did some of the pioneer research with LSD which was not widely known until well into the 1960s.

Lashbrook said, "any direct relationship between the drug and Olson's death would be a little difficult to justify," since, he said, the body would have eliminated any elements of LSD within 24 hours and the death occurred more than a week after the experiment.

"Possibly LSD had brought up something in his past that was bothering him," Lashbrook continued. "Certainly at the time the LSD would appear to have been not directly related



MAJ. GEN. FELLEENZ
Army experimented

and it would have raised a lot of questions that I or no one else was prepared to answer."

When Lashbrook was asked why he did not mention the LSD to Olson's widow, he replied, "How would you explain it. The name itself would not have meant anything to her."

"At that time," he continued, "everyone was very very upset. No one expected anything like that. Everyone was quite beside themselves as to what to do."

Lashbrook said he had apparently been misunderstood by Mrs. Olson when he described how her husband had died. Instead of awaking to see Olson running toward the closed window in their room, as Mrs. Olson reported, Lashbrook said he was awakened by a crash of glass, switched on the room light, saw Olson's bed empty and a hole in the window.