

Olson witness surfaces

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By ROLLIE ATKINSON
Staff Writer

A key figure believed to hold many of the answers left unresolved in the 1953 LSD suicide of former Fort Detrick scientist Dr. Frank R. Olson is reported to be in the Washington, D.C. area and expected to testify soon before government officials on Central Intelligence Agency drug experiments.

Dr. Sidney Gottlieb, formerly in charge of all CIA drug tests, from 1951 until 1973, is reported by the Washington Post to have retained legal counsel, surfacing after two months of futile attempts by the media and the government to find him.

Gottlieb was also a "contact person" for the CIA with the Special Operations division at Detrick where Olson worked.

Gottlieb has been described as the CIA superior involved in the 1953 incident where Olson and at least three other local scientists were covertly given LSD.

Details of Olson's death, kept quiet for

23 years, were first linked to CIA involvement in the Rockefeller Commission report on domestic CIA activities released last June.

In that report, supported by testimony of Rockefeller Commission members, Gottlieb is said to be the man responsible for the destruction of 152 files on CIA drug tests including details of the Olson tragedy.

Olson's wife, Alice, who lives near Frederick in Old Braddock, and his three children announced publicly last July their intentions to file a suit against the CIA for full disclosure of the facts and for punitive damages.

David Kairys, a Philadelphia lawyer, preparing the Olson's suit, was contacted Tuesday night and asked whether Gottlieb figured in the Olsons' case.

"We want very much to hear what he (Gottlieb) has to say," Kairys said. The lawyer also alluded to the possibility of further developments in the case in the

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very near future, but refused further comment at this time.

It had been reported that the Olsons' lawyers (Kairys and David Rudovsky) have been involved in negotiation sessions with the Justice Department on a possible out of court settlement.

The Olsons' received an audience with President Gerald Ford on July 21 at the president's request and the possibility of an out-of-court settlement was alluded to when the president ordered the attorney general to make available all records and to have the Justice Department assist in whatever way possible.

At the time of the presidential meeting it was reported in some places that the family was considering dropping its suit against the CIA.

The Olsons, as clarification, issued a statement at the time, reasserting their desire to have all of the facts known and the proper accountabilities made.

Olson's tragic death was reported in the June Rockefeller Report without mentioning him by name. The story of his subsequent fall from a New York Hotel window after a nervous breakdown believed caused by the CIA administered dose of LSD given him a week before was immediately recognized by Mrs. Olson and Olson's former co-workers.

Members of the Rockefeller Commission have said they found it

difficult to research the CIA drug tests and were uncertain of many names, of involved persons because of the missing drug records, believed destroyed by Gottlieb in 1973, the year he retired from the CIA.

Gottlieb, was said to be in India by the CIA when contacted several weeks ago. But the Washington Post report said that Gottlieb used a Colorado mailing address during that time to receive mail.

Gottlieb, 57, has a Ph.D. in chemistry and once held a position at the University of Maryland before joining the CIA. Gottlieb was known by several of Olson's co-workers and said to have been seen around the Detrick base often near the time of Olson's death.

However, after Olson's death both Gottlieb and another former CIA agent who worked with the Detrick scientists, Robert V. Lashbrook, were said to have disappeared.

The Rockefeller Commission said that all CIA personnel involved in the Olson incident received some sort of reprimand.

However the CIA, under Gottlieb's continued rule, carried on its drug testing, according to the Rockefeller report, until at least 1963 and possibly as late as 1973.