

LSD Death Probe Inactive

By William Claiborne
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NEW YORK, July 14—Neither the New York City police department nor the medical examiner's office has actively reopened an investigation into the death of Frank R. Olson, the Army research scientist who plunged to his death from a Manhattan hotel window in 1953 after surreptitiously being given LSD in a Central Intelligence Agency Experiment.

New York's acting chief medical examiner, Dr. Dominick DiMaio said today he lacked the investigatory powers to reopen an inquiry into Olson's death, and was simply waiting for new information from the police.

"It's reopened to the extent that if anybody does anything, we would hope they would bring it to our attention. I don't have any police powers to do otherwise," DiMaio said in an interview.

However, a spokesman for Police Commissioner Michael J. Codd, said, "Our official position is that until we've been notified by the medical examiner's office that they've found anything different, we

are not investigating. We will follow their lead."

Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau said that his office, so far, has not begun investigating the circumstances of Olson's death.

Morgenthau said his staff was checking to see whether the district attorney's office has jurisdiction, and whether the statute of limitations on prosecuting had expired.

The disclaimers by the three top law enforcement agencies normally involved in an unusual death appeared to contradict what lawyers for Olson's widow said they had been told.

"The way we understood it is that they had officially reopened the case," said David Kairys, one of the Olson family's attorneys.

Alice Olson, the widow, has said she intends to sue the CIA, seeking several million dollars for the "wrongful death" of her husband.

Olson plunged out of a 10-floor window of the Statler Hotel here, where he had shared a room with Robert Lashbrook, who, the family said, worked for the CIA.

Olson reportedly began hallucinating at the chemical warfare center at Ft. Detrick, in Frederick, Md., in November, 1953, where he worked as a biochemist, and was taken to New York by CIA agents to visit a psychiatrist, Dr. Harold Abramson.

Abramson, one of the country's earliest experimenters with LSD, served in the chemical warfare service from 1942 to 1946 and, thereafter for 10 years was a consultant in psychology to the Department of the Army. The Olson family said he may have worked for the CIA.

Repeated inquiries at Abramson's East 58th Street office, which bears the inscription, "The Asthmatic Children's Foundation of NYC," have been answered by refusals to comment. Today, an assistant said Abramson was not in, and that he would not comment in any case.

DiMaio said today that he did not plan to question Abramson because he does not have the authority and because, "I'm sure Dr. Abramson will not talk, for obvious reasons." He said he was referring to the expected lawsuit.