

New Report in CIA Death

New York

A former Central Intelligence Agency employee said yesterday he believed 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.

The statement by Robert V. Lashbrook in a telephone interview appeared to contradict a report by the Rockefeller commission that the drug had been given to the scientist, Frank R. Olson, without his knowledge.

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 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 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 researcher, recalled attending a "technical meeting" in November, 1953, with three other CIA employees, Olson and five other employees of the Special Operations Division at Ft. Detrick, Md., where the drug was reportedly given to four or five persons.

Lashbrook said he had not personally been present when "everyone agreed" to take part in a test with LSD, but he said someone he felt was reliable had told him of the arrangement.

"It was my 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.

"The only thing was that the time was not specified," Lashbrook said.

Lashbrook said that he himself had been asked if he would be a subject in the LSD tests during the meeting and that he had reluctantly agreed.

He said he had been a "guinea pig" 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.

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."

New York Times

NYTimes filed CIA (d).