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LSD Tester's Death

NYT (longer) filed CIA (d).

CIA Suicide -- New Probe

New York

A man believed to be an employee of the Central Intelligence Agency concealed major facts from the Manhattan Medical Examiner's office in an interview about a biochemist who plummeted to his death from a hotel window 22 years ago, authorities said yesterday.

The biochemist, Frank R. Olson, a 43-year-old civilian researcher, had reportedly participated unwittingly in an agency experiment with the hallucinogenic drug LSD. The acting chief medical examiner, Dominick Di

Maio, said that as a result of recent disclosures about the death, he was reopening the case, which was closed in 1953 without a definite ruling.

Di Maio said that Robert Lashbrook, who shared room 1018A in the Statler Hotel with Olson, formally identified the body. But he apparently omitted "four big things" when he was asked about the death, Di Maio said.

Members of the Olson family said that they believe Lashbrook worked for the CIA. The agency has refused

to confirm or deny their belief, and Lashbrook's whereabouts are not known.

Di Maio said that records indicated Lashbrook "never mentioned the man had taken LSD."

Furthermore, the doctor said, newspaper reports have disclosed that Lashbrook told the police investigating the incident that he had been awakened by the crash of glass and found Olson's bed empty, but that he told the biochemist's widow, Alice, he had seen her husband "going at a full run toward the window."

The run toward the window would have been "characteristic of a man on LSD," Di Maio said, and the record indicates that Lashbrook made no mention of the run.

"In other words," Di Maio said, "we knew absolutely nothing."

Di Maio said that it was routine in cases of fatal falls for the Medical Examiner's Office to inquire about a victim's mental health, and whether he had been under treatment. He said that he felt certain Lashbrook had been asked these questions.

New York Times