



COMMENTARY AND OPINION ON HISTORY &amp; POLITICS

## Hugh's News

# Code name: ARTICHOKE

by Hugh Turley

There are things in our history that most Americans don't know because they haven't been told, or what they have been told is not true. Unfortunately, some of the things are so disturbing that many of us would prefer to keep it that way. Such is the case of the death of Frank Olson.

On Monday, Nov. 23, 1953, Olson, a scientist at Fort Detrick, MD, told his boss he wanted to quit his job. The following Saturday Olson fell to his death from a tenth floor window of a hotel in New York City.

Government officials told his widow and three young children that Olson jumped or fell from the window as a result of a nervous breakdown. That story remained "the truth" for 22 years.

In 1975 the Rockefeller Commission's examination of CIA domestic operations was reported in the *Washington Post*. The article said that a civilian employee of the Army had unknowingly taken LSD as part of a CIA test. The Post quoted the commission saying that the subject "developed serious side effects and was sent to New York with a CIA escort for psychiatric treatment. Several days later, he jumped from a tenth-floor window of his room and died as a result."

Although the victim was unnamed and a number of things in the *Post* article concerning the death were false, the widow, Alice Olson, and her children recognized that the man in the story was their husband and father. It was clear to them from the year, the tenth-floor window in New York and the victim being a scientist.

The family states that it was also clear to them that the truth was being suppressed because the victim was unnamed and no one bothered to tell the family, the story was being released. The family called a press conference and announced that they were filing a lawsuit against the United States government.

The following day, Dick Cheney, then White House deputy staff director, sent a memo to his boss, then Chief of Staff Donald Rumsfeld, concerning the need to keep classified information secret. The Olson family would later find the memo at the Ford Presidential Library.

President Gerald Ford invited the Olson family to the White House, apologized to the widow and her children, and promised a full accounting. CIA Director William Colby then invited Olson's widow and her oldest

son, Eric, to lunch in his office and gave them a redacted CIA file on Frank Olson.

In return for what finally appeared to be the truth, the family dropped its lawsuit and agreed to a settlement. But they had been deceived again. The facts changed to say that Olson's death was related to the infamous MK-ULTRA mind control experiments, but the conclusion that he fell or jumped remained the same.

Further investigation convinced the Olsons that Frank had actually been murdered. The full story with links to official documents can be found on Eric Olson's website [www.FrankOlsonProject.org](http://www.FrankOlsonProject.org).

In 1952, Frank Olson was a CIA officer and acting chief of the Special Operations at Fort Detrick, the government's most secret biological weapons laboratory. His division researched and experimented with assassination techniques, biological warfare, terminal interrogations and LSD mind-control.

A family statement in 2002 alleges Olson's death was related to a CIA operation called ARTICHOKE that "involved the development of special, extreme methods of interrogation." The file given to the family by Colby contained references to "the Artichoke Committee."

The family said that Frank Olson had ethical concerns after he "witnessed terminal interrogations in Germany in the summer of 1953" and he wanted to get out of his job.

The Olson family eventually contacted Norman Cournoyer, one of Frank Olson's oldest friends and closest colleagues at Fort Detrick. Cournoyer told the family that Olson joined the CIA in the late 1940s, and as part of the ARTICHOKE program made numerous trips to Europe where he witnessed torture interrogations of Soviet prisoners, Nazis and others.

Cournoyer also told them Olson learned biological weapons, including anthrax were used during the Korean War, despite denials by the U.S. government. Cournoyer repeated his story in a 2002 German TV documentary film, "Code Name ARTICHOKE," which can be seen on [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com).

In the past the Communist threat seemed to justify secret immoral activity; today, terrorism is used to justify secret CIA prisons overseas.

If some official has a crisis of conscience will homicide be necessary?