

SEPT. 9, 1990  
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT  
Year after teen died,  
doubts nag at ruling  
13-inch fall cause

BY JAMIE WISE  
Democrat State Desk

**MARSHALL** - A year ago today, the body of Olivia "Janie" Ward was brought to this city's town square, where she was pronounced dead of a fall from a 13-inch porch.

Although authorities have deemed the case officially closed, a chiropractic surgeon familiar with spinal injuries believes a second autopsy will have to be performed to find the real cause of her death.

"There's no way she could sustain injuries like that in a 13-inch fall. It's impossible that she could receive injuries from that that would be fatal," Dr. James Ennis, a chiropractic surgeon from Clinton, said Friday. "The autopsy was very incomplete. Too many things were left out. A second autopsy may be the only way we can determine without a doubt what her injuries really were."

Ward, a 5-foot-11, 204-pound junior at Marshall High School, was found dead by ambulance attendants about 8:30 a.m. Sept. 9 in the back of a pickup truck parked on the lot of a local bank, a few hundred feet from the city ambulance service.

According to witnesses, Ward was drinking beer from a keg at a junior class party about 7 p.m. when she fell backward from a 13-inch-high porch.

The state medical examiner's autopsy report stated the impact from the fall crushed Ward's spine and separated her skull from her spine.

Ennis says, "No way."

"There are only three ways we know of where an injury like that could occur," he said. "One is if someone dived into a shallow pool and hit their forehead on the bottom. The sec-

ond is if someone was in a car wreck and their body was thrown forward and the forehead hit the windshield or the dash; or, number three, if someone was hanged."

Although authorities accepted the cause of death as being a fall from a 13-inch-high porch, several facts remain:

- Ambulance workers and a witness who identified the body say Ward was dressed in a white pin-striped shirt, a black T-shirt, blue jeans, tennis shoes, a bra and panties on the bank parking lot. When her body reached the medical examiner's office in Little Rock, the panties and white shirt were missing.

- Ambulance workers also said that when Ward's body was brought to Marshall, it was wet from head to toe and covered with begger lice. They also said they found sand in her hair and beneath her bra.

- The workers also said she smelled of sweet perfume. Party-goers told police Ward reeked of feces and urine after she was hurt, apparently because her injuries caused her to lose control of her bowels.

"I am still not satisfied with the details of the case," Prosecuting Attorney H.G. Foster of Conway said Friday. "I don't know why she was wet. I don't know where the sand came from. But there was nothing I could do, so I had to close the case."

Ennis said those very facts hint at foul play, and he believes there is enough evidence for a grand jury to be empaneled to investigate the death.

"I would be more than willing to testify at a grand jury hearing," he said. "I hope they do call one, because it's not right."

MARSHALL, MISSOURI  
11/22/90  
**Grand Jury  
Inquiry  
Requested**

Nov 22 - 1990

Ron Ward, whose daughter was found dead in the back of a pickup truck in Marshall September 9, 1989 has been pressing for a grand jury inquiry into the death. Ward also requested criminal charges be filed against five officials for interfering with the investigation.

Olivia "Janie" Ward, 16, was found dead by ambulance attendants in the back of a pickup truck parked in a parking lot in Marshall.

An Arkansas State Police investigation determined the girl fell backward off a porch while attending a party and struck her head.

After an extensive investigation, Prosecuting Attorney H. G. Foster found no basis for felony charges against any individual. Foster said he would not call for a grand jury investigation because he is satisfied with the State Police inquiry.

Denies to  
a grand jury  
he does not  
want the  
truth to come  
out!