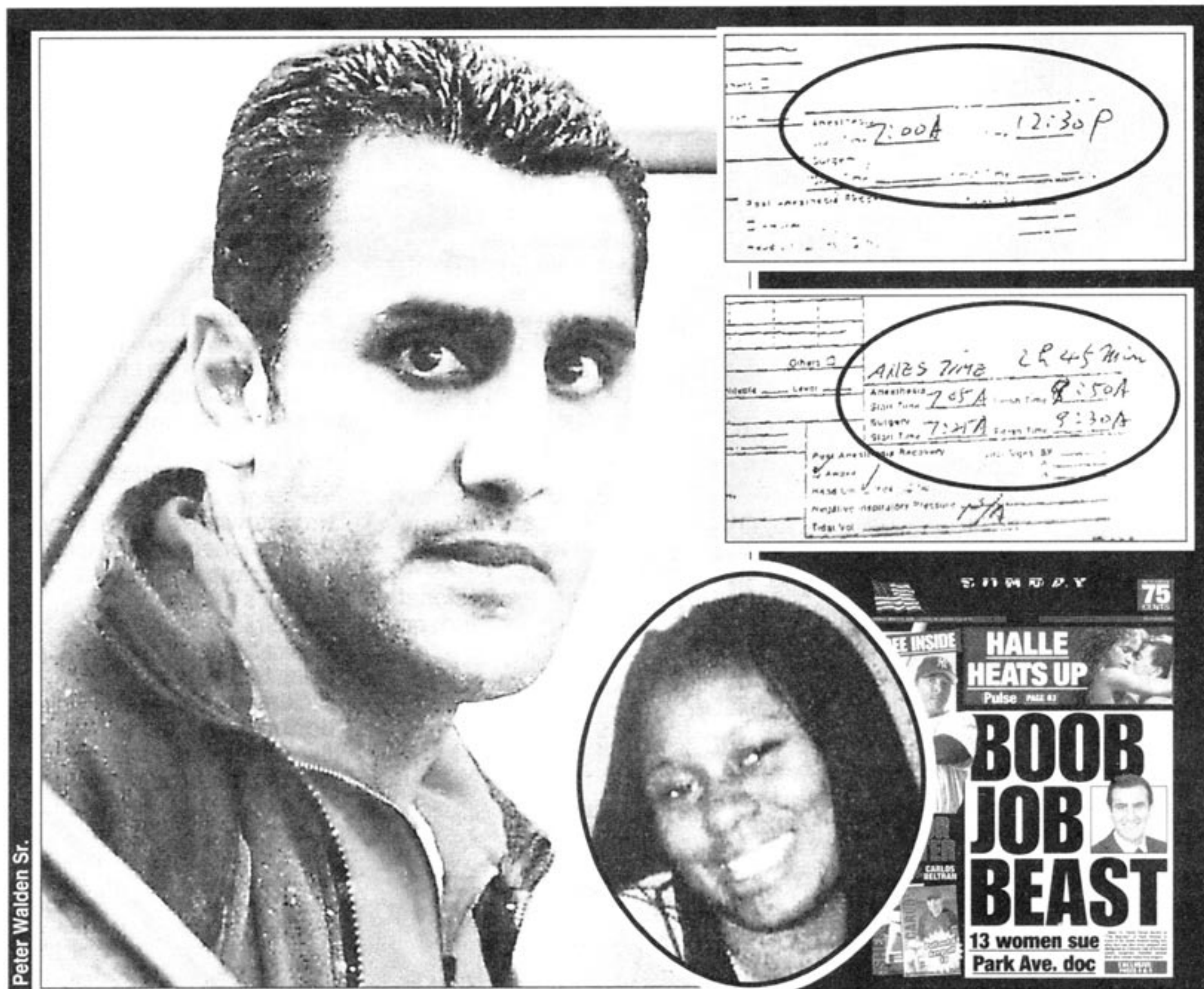




# New wrinkles in 'butcher' probe



Peter Walden Sr.

**REMOVED:** Dr. David Ostad, subject of a report in last week's Post (right), has left or been kicked out of his offices and even his Web site. Among the new evidence in a lawsuit against the doctor are two different anesthesia records for the operation in which Nicole Salters (inset) died.

## EXCLUSIVE

By DAVID HAFETZ

A plastic surgeon dubbed "the butcher" by some of the dozen patients suing him has been booted from his Park Avenue office — and is facing a new avalanche of accusations.

The most alarming new charge against Dr. David Ostad involves an allegation that he and an anesthesiologist altered operation records for a woman who died of complications from her April 2004 breast reduction.

A lawyer for the family of the 25-year-old woman, Nicole Salters, said he discovered two conflicting anesthesia records from the same surgery, suggesting "a possible cover-up" of how long Ostad and Dr. Jae-Hong Choi had Salters under anesthesia.

A medical examiner's report said Salters died of liver-failure complications stemming from her exposure to halothane, an anesthetic used during her breast reduction.

The lawyer, Mark Bodner, said one report, faxed from Ostad's office to a hospital after Nicole fell ill, states that she was under anesthesia for 5½ hours. He said the other report, released by both Ostad and Choi after Nicole's death, stated she was under for only two hours and 45 minutes.

The Salters provided the two documents to The Post.

"This is the most extreme example of what appears to be altered records that I have ever seen," Bodner said. "All of this warrants an investigation."

The state Health Department began probing Ostad in December 2001, following an unrelated complaint involving a thigh liposuction that went wrong.

Although barred by law from discussing a specific investigation, an agency spokesman said if officials find evidence suggesting possible criminal activity — including falsifying of medical records — "we would refer the case to the appropriate law-enforcement agency for investigation."

Arthur Levin, director of

the Center for Medical Consumers, a patient advocacy group, said there's "no rational reason" why two anesthesia reports exist from Nicole Salters' operation.

"I think they're just dishonest," Nicole's mother, Dorothy Salters, said of the two doctors. "I think they've gotten away with so many things that they thought they could get away with this, but they didn't prepare for her to die."

A lawyer for Choi declined comment, calling the Salters' wrongful-death lawsuit — which was filed last month — "too new." The lawyer said Choi "denies all allegations of negligence or malpractice."

Neither Ostad nor the lawyer representing him in the Salters case returned calls.