



National Public Safety Summit on Forensic Science Quality Assurance in the Crime Laboratory

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National Ethical Work Environment

- 45% of employees have lied to their supervisor
- 51% have committed an unethical act at work
 - Violated quality standards
 - Lied to cover up breach in quality
- 36% have lied on or falsified a report



Topics

- Lessons Learned
- Employees (leadership/staff)
- Procedures & Policies
- Technology



Discuss: Those in Authority

Sell of weapons from Property Room-Cleveland
PD





Investigative Reporter

- November 2002, the Houston Police Department Crime Lab comes under scrutiny as a result of a series of investigative reports by a local TV station-errors on DNA cases
- Josiah Sutton case is highlighted (October 25, 1998)-DQ alpha testing



[HPD crime lab analyst quits amid pressure](#)

By STEVE MCVICKER and ROMA KHANNA : Copyright 2005 Houston Chronicle

On Monday, Hurtt said that, with the exception of the DNA division, the HPD **crime lab** is now accredited.

06/14/2005

[Retesting ordered in crime lab chemist's cases](#)

By STEVE MCVICKER : Copyright 2005 Houston Chronicle

I did not get enough training on (**lab** equipment). Patel continues to work in the **crime lab**, although HPD emphasized **last** week that his work is being monitored closely.

06/06/2005

[HPD admits it failed to review suspect lab work](#)

By STEVE MCVICKER : Copyright 2005 Houston Chronicle

A former Justice Department inspector general, Bromwich was hired earlier this year to investigate the practices and work of the troubled **crime lab**.

06/02/2005

[Probe finds crime lab faked results in 4 cases](#)

By ROMA KHANNA and STEVE MCVICKER : Copyright 2005 Houston Chronicle

Still working at **labOne** analyst resigned in March 2001, but the other still works at the **crime lab**.

06/01/2005

[Crime lab report finds 6-year gap in supervision](#)

Associated Press

Bromwich said more than 1,960 case reviews will take place across the **lab's** six forensic disciplines.

05/31/2005

[Crime lab watchdog bill sent to Perry](#)

By STEVE MCVICKER : Copyright 2005 Houston Chronicle

John Whitmire, D-Houston, the idea for the **crime lab** watchdog agency stems from the exposure of problems in the forensic division of several **law** enforcement agencies in the state.

05/31/2005

[Lawmakers poised to OK limited crime lab reforms](#)

By ROMA KHANNA : Copyright 2005 Houston Chronicle

Legislation that would expand DPS's ability to investigate **crime labs**, sponsored by Rep.

05/17/2005

[Crime lab accredited in all divisions except DNA](#)

By ROMA KHANNA : Copyright 2005 Houston Chronicle

A longtime critic of the **crime lab** has said, however, that accreditation does not guarantee the quality of its work.

05/12/2005

[HPD lab accredited except for DNA section](#)

By ROMA KHANNA : Copyright 2005 Houston Chronicle

These things were not going on in **Houston** until sometime in the recent past," Keaton said. HPD's accreditation is limited in two areas of the **lab** where testing has been suspended since 2002.

05/11/2005

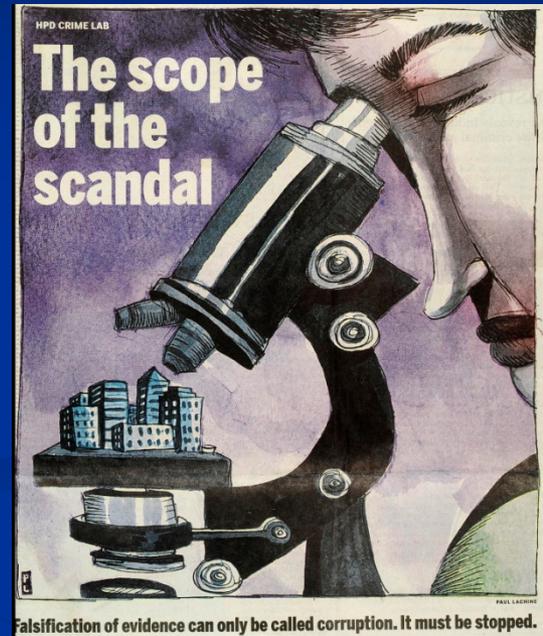
[Report on HPD crime lab cites lack of cooperation](#)

By ROMA KHANNA and STEVE MCVICKER : Copyright 2005 Houston Chronicle

His team of scientists and investigators has met with three former senior **crime lab** employees but has had difficulty meeting with others, he said.

04/30/2005

Houston PD Crime Lab



Under the microscope

Biological Evidence (Past Condition)



Past Crime Lab Facility Condition





Action Taken

- Independent DNA Audit at the request of HPD – December 2002
- NFSTC Needs Assessment-2003
- Over 30 Separate internal investigations by Internal Affairs
- Internal Affairs investigations were reviewed by the District Attorney's Office for criminal misconduct.
- Two separate Grand Juries reviewed the evidence in the crime lab investigations and no indictments were returned.



Action Taken

- As a result of the investigations, various administrative cites were sustained. An **Assistant Chief of Police**, the **Crime Lab Director**, and a **DNA supervisor** all resigned or retired in lieu of termination. Two additional employees were indefinitely suspended, and numerous other employees received discipline that ranged from a written reprimand to 28 days of suspension.
- Legislative Hearings/Mandatory Accreditation Legislation

Building a Case for Quality Assurance



- In 2004 another case involving the HPD Crime Lab receives widespread media attention which came under review by the Innocence Project for post conviction DNA testing on hair
- George Rodriguez case comes under scrutiny for ABO testing
- 2004 Project 280-evidence not inventoried



2004

Officials urge special probe of crime lab

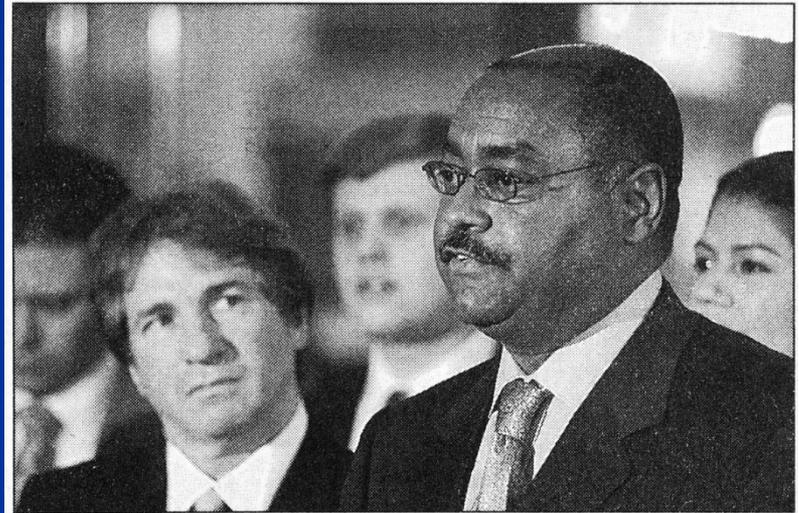
Famed attorney weighs in on call for major reforms at HPD facility

By STEVE MCVICKER
HOUSTON CHRONICLE

In the wake of new allegations of problems at the Houston Police Department crime laboratory, politicians, activists and a nationally known defense lawyer urged local officials Friday to appoint a special master to conduct a large-scale review of evidence processed by HPD analysts.



LAB: Motion targets 1987 sexual assault



E. JOE DEERING : CHRONICLE

LEADING THE CHARGE: State Sen. Rodney Ellis, D-Houston, right, and Barry Scheck of the Innocence Project, along with numerous other area officials, push for reforms in the Houston police crime lab Friday.



Independent Investigation

- Stakeholder Committee appointed by Chief
 - lawyers, public officials, universities, forensic members
- March 2005 City of Houston entered agreement Fried Frank
- Michael Bromwich-former Inspector General (FBI Lab)
- July 2007 Report Issued-Approximately 135 Recommendations



Independent Investigation

- \$5.3 Million spent
- 2 1/2 years
- Approximately 3500 cases reviews
- Serology Cases review period 1980 cases-15 year period prior to 2002 shutdown of DNA section
- Review of current operations



HPD Crime Lab: Old vs. New

- Old
 - Lack of Support & Resources
 - Ineffective Management
 - Lack of Quality Control & Quality Assurance
 - Unaccredited lab

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May 11,
2006:

The Office of the Independent Investigator issued the **Fifth Report of the Independent Investigator for the Houston Police Department Crime Laboratory and Property Room.**

Click to read the [Press Release](#) or the [Report](#).

January 4,
2006:

The Office of the Independent Investigator issued the **Fourth Report of the Independent Investigator for the Houston Police Department Crime Laboratory and Property Room.**

Click to read the [Press Release](#) or the [Report](#).

July 6,
2005:

The Office of the Independent Investigator issued the **Phase II Plan of the Independent Investigator for the HPD Crime Lab and Property Room .**

Click to read the [Phase II Plan.](#)

June 30 ,
2005:

The Office of the Independent Investigator issued the Third Report of the Independent Investigator for the Houston Police Department Crime Laboratory and Property Room.

Click to read the [Press Release](#) or the [Report](#).

May 31,
2005:

The Office of the Independent Investigator issued the Second Report of the Independent Investigator for the Houston Police Department Crime Laboratory and Property Room.

Click to read the [Press Release](#) or the [Report](#).



Suggest that misconduct is rampant and is certain to continue:

- Question: How can we be assured that misconduct will not occur in the future?
- Isn't it true that crime labs around the country have had problems



What gives us assurance that the lab is repaired and ready:

- Accreditation
- Standard Operation Procedures
- Comprehensive Quality System
- Technical and Admin. review of cases required
- Extensive training
- New management

Success: National Accreditation 2005 and 2006 DNA



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ATF RECOGNIZES HOUSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT'S FIREARMS LAB FOR 700 'HITS' USING BALLISTIC TECHNOLOGY

HOUSTON





Success: HPD Crime Lab

2009 International
Association Chief's
of Police Vollmer
Forensic Award



DNA Robots



16 sample robot
\$50,000



96 Sample robot
\$160,000

Managing Evidence

- Truckload of drugs



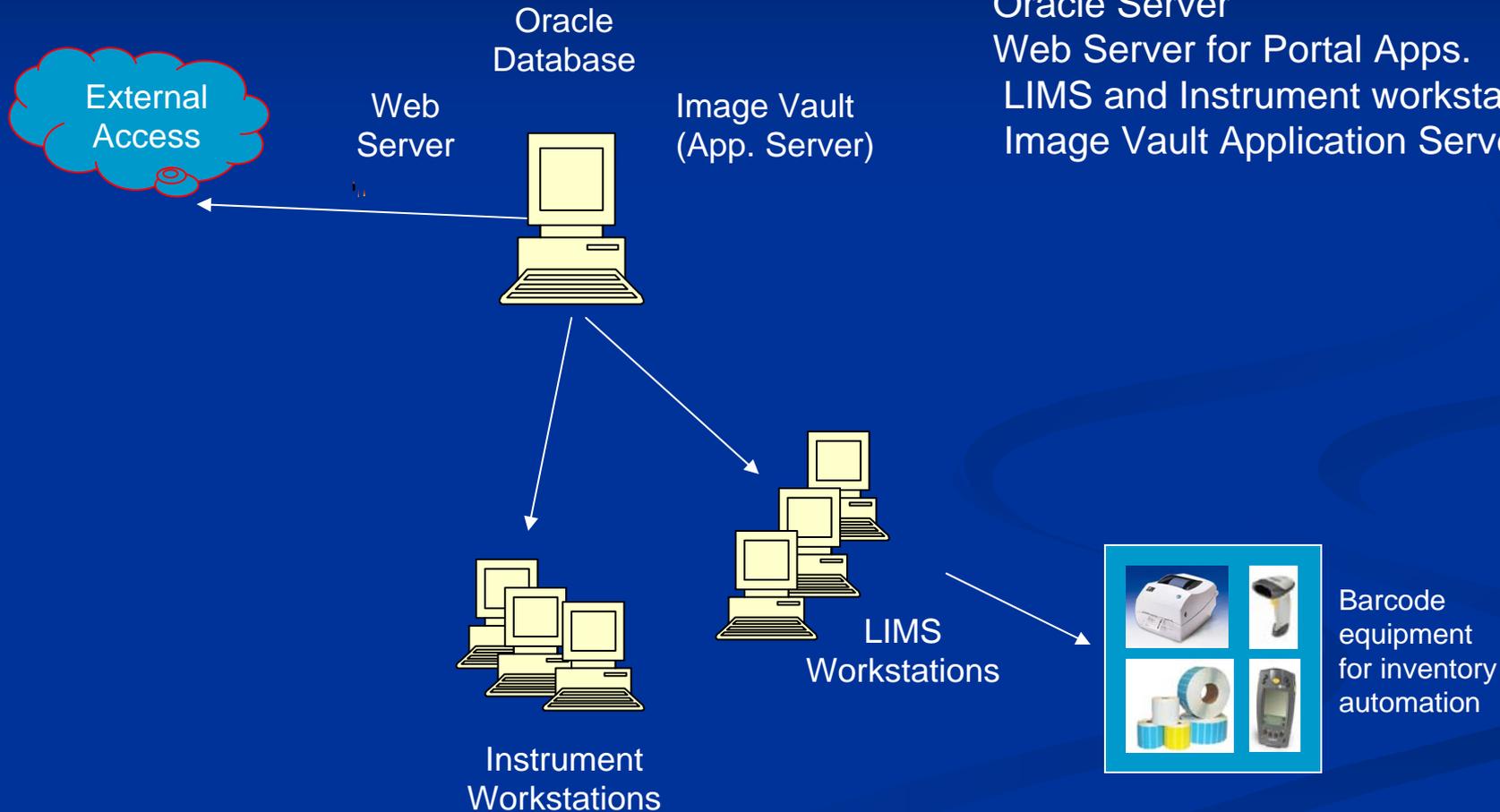
- Bundles of drugs





Central Laboratory Configuration

Lab computers include:
Oracle Server
Web Server for Portal Apps.
LIMS and Instrument workstations
Image Vault Application Server



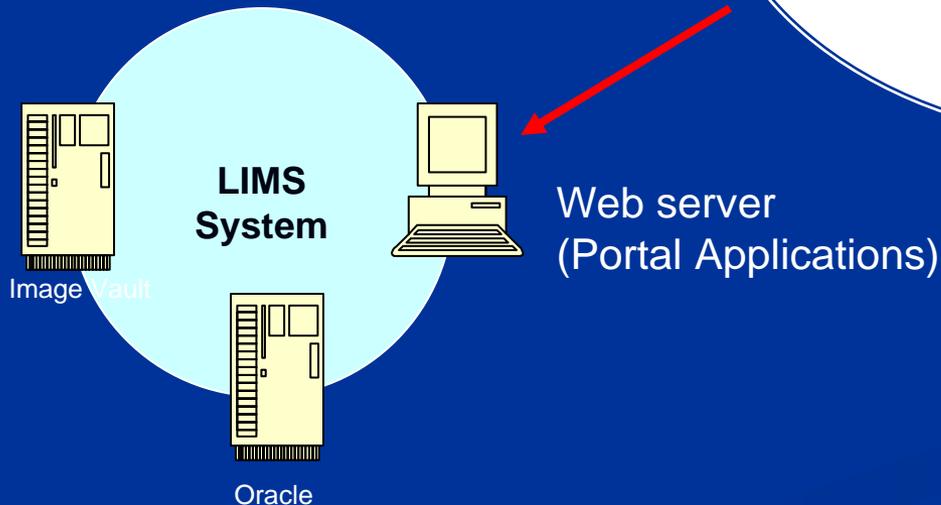


Connectivity to Department Web Portal

Typical LIMS portal applications include:

- Department Inquiry
- Prosecutors Module
- Subpoena Tracking
- Evidence Prelog

HPD
Prosecutors
Submitting Agencies
Other Law Enforcement





Accountability

- Celebrate Accomplishments
- Participate in Forensic Community
- Partner with Universities/Crime Labs
- Update the Public
- Addressing Quality Assurance Incidents



Maintaining Status Quo

- Coming Under Fire-Reputation
- Internal Investigations
- Disciplinary Action
- External Investigations
- Wrongful Convictions
- Litigation/Incarceration



HPD Crime Lab: Old vs. New

■ Old

- Lack of Support & Resources
- Ineffective Management
- Lack of Quality Control & Quality Assurance
- Unaccredited lab

Progress

■ New

- Improved staffing, facility, instruments, training, funding increased
- Managers hired and promoted with management experience and expertise in field
- Succession planning
- Quality assurance program implemented
- Accredited lab
- Continue to improve