

March 11, 2003

Worst Crime Lab in the Country Or is Houston Typical?

By ADAM LIPTAK

When Josiah Sutton went on trial for rape in 1999, prosecutors in Houston had 1 faulty. But they did have the rapist's DNA, and technicians from the Houston

That was enough to persuade the jurors to convict Mr. Sutton and send him to prison

But new testing has conclusively demonstrated that the DNA was not Mr. Sutton's, th

HFSC background

- 2002 series of laboratory scandals
- 2012 HPD leadership and Houston Mayor begin the negotiation of separating the forensic functions from HPD
- April 2014 Houston Forensic Science Center incorporated
 - Local government corporation with an independent board of directors and corporate officers
 - Included several different functional units from HPD
 - “laboratory”
 - “ID”
 - “CSU”
 - Started with ~50% City of Houston Employees and ~50% sworn officers
 - Dan Garner as president and CEO

[Crew] wanted: For hazardous journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in case of success.

-Ernest Shackleton

HFSC background

- September 2015
 - Now ~190 employees ~50% corporate employees ~25% city of Houston ~25% sworn officers
 - COO, CFO and finance division, business development director, training division, and *QA division*
 - Added 6 PhD's
- Board of directors includes:
 - Nicole Caserez
 - Anthony Graves
 - Sandra Thompson

COPS IN LAB COATS



Curbing *Wrongful Convictions* through
Independent Forensic Laboratories

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PHOTO ESSAY

Moment of Sleuth

The Death and Afterlife of Houston's Crime Lab

BY [MICHAEL HARDY](#) AND [BRIAN GOLDMAN](#) • 5/3/2015 AT 11:59PM



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SEPTEMBER

The Best of International Houston

HFSC includes

- Biology
- Controlled substances
- Latents
- Toxicology
- Firearms
- Digital
- Audio/Video
- Crime Scene
- About 30,000 requests annually
- ~\$25M operating budget
- Serves ~4M people
- On pace for ~400 homicides this year

HFSC

- Not the first to separate from law enforcement
- Not the only model of independence
- Is farther down the spectrum than most
- Does have more control of our systems than many

What “quality” means

- QA at the corporate executive level
- Quality goals in corporate plan
- Accreditation
- Certification
- Open control
- Monitoring
- Auditing
- Proficiency
- “Blind” QC

What quality also means

- Timeliness
- Financial
- Sample identification and integrity