Was DNA Evidence in O.J. Simpson Case Contaminated in LAPD Crime Lab?

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General Information

Description
The director of a Denver DNA lab, testifying as a defense witness in the O.J. Simpson trial, impugns the credibility of prosecution DNA evidence by saying contamination levels at the LAPD crime lab are "definitely" the worst he's seen in a study of 23 U.S. labs.

Keywords
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ANN CURRY, anchor:

O.J. Simpson's accusers go to work today trying to rebuild the credibility of crucial evidence. That story now from NBC's David Bloom.

DAVID BLOOM reporting:

O.J. Simpson's lawyers set out to drive a stake through the heart of the prosecution's case—DNA tests that implicate Simpson in the killings. Dr. John Gerdes, clinical director of a Denver DNA laboratory, told jurors that the Los Angeles Police Department's crime lab is so contaminated that it should have been shut down and cleaned up two years ago.

Mr. BARRY SCHECK (Simpson Attorney): Is the LAPD, in terms of levels of contamination, worse than any other forensic laboratory you've ever seen?

Dr. JOHN GERDES: Definitely.

BLOOM: According to Dr. Gerdes, who's studied 23 DNA labs around the country, evidence handling at the LAPD lab is so sloppy there's a tremendous risk of cross-contamination, where blood from one sample gets onto another sample, rendering the DNA test results meaningless. One example: Lab technician Colin Yamauchi handling Simpson's blood vial, the glove found at his estate, and blood stains from the crime scene, one right after the other. Prosecutors will have their work cut out for them because if Dr. Gerdes is to be believed, the prosecution's mountain of DNA evidence looks more like a molehill. David Bloom, NBC News, Los Angeles.