DNA TESTS: NOT THAT PERFECT - SCRIPT

DNA is known as the gold standard of physical **evidence** in **court** but it's not perfect. Officials in Texas have discovered that their crime labs might have miscalculated the probability of DNA **matches** on thousands of cases **going back** years. It's a major **headache** and as NPR's Martin Kaste reports, some experts say it shows how the justice system sometimes trusts DNA too much. When you're analysing DNA, you have to keep things nice and clean. The labs have to be modern, **roomy**, and secure. You see, it's easy to match DNA when you're looking at a liquid blood **sample** or cheek swab because you know you're dealing with material from just one person. But when the sample comes off a light switch or doorknob, or a gun, then you're dealing with DNA samples of who knows how many people, all blenderized together. It's as if somebody took out **a bunch of** social security numbers, jumbled them up and now you have to **figure out** which digits belong to which person. Incredibly, they often can sort this out. The techniques to do it just keep getting better. But that's also the problem. Different labs are using different approaches, and that means, results can vary. One lab might find a match while another lab might call that same sample inconclusive. Over the summer, Texas officials realized that their labs were using an **outdated** protocol for calculating probabilities in DNA "mixtures". This may have affected thousands of cases going back to 1999. Jack Roady is the district attorney in Galveston. "We have to go back and identify which of those cases involved DNA mixtures where the lab may have given incorrect results.

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