



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

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\*\*\*\*\*PUBLICATION ADVISORY\*\*\*\*\*

### NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE EXAMINES MICROBIAL EVIDENCE: THE INVISIBLE TRACES WE LEAVE BEHIND

WASHINGTON – The Office of Justice Programs’ National Institute of Justice today published an article summarizing NIJ-funded microbial forensic research and projects taking place across the United States. One significant advance in modern forensic science came in 2001, with the anthrax attacks in Florida, New York and Washington, D.C. Letters containing deadly bacterial spores that caused anthrax were sent to several news media offices and two U.S. senators. This event triggered one of the largest FBI investigations in history and marked the birth of microbial forensics. Microbial evidence, a form of trace evidence, can be bacteria, fungi or viruses humans leave behind at crime scenes.

The research described in this article was funded by two NIJ grants awarded to the University of California, San Diego and the University of North Texas Health Science Center. This article is based on the grantee final reports, *Evaluating the Skin Microbiome as Trace Evidence* by Rob Knight et. al. and *Human Microbiome Species and Genes for Human Identification* by Bruce Budowle.

**TITLE:** *The Forensic Microbiome: The Invisible Traces We Leave Behind*

**AUTHOR:** National Institute of Justice

**HERE:** <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/forensic-microbiome-invisible-traces-we-leave-behind>

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