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Broken Rules, Broken Justice: The DNA Evidence Problem

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I still remember the shock I felt when, as San Francisco district attorney, I discovered the police crime lab was using DNA from child and sexual assault victims to investigate unrelated crimes. This wasn't just a violation of privacy -- it was a betrayal of victims who had come forward seeking justice, only to have their genetic information weaponized against them.

Today, I'm experiencing that same sense of alarm as reports emerge that the FBI may have violated Department of Justice policies in the high-profile Idaho student murder case by improperly using DNA databases. Once again, we see law enforcement agencies circumventing rules to solve high-profile cases.

While we all desire swift justice, particularly in horrific cases like the Idaho murders, allowing government agencies to operate above the law creates dangerous precedents that undermine rather than advance justice. These shortcuts don't just violate civil liberties; they threaten the integrity of prosecutions, undermine public trust, and ultimately make our communities less safe.