



# ***Exploding The Phone***

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Bibliographic Cover Sheet

Title	<b>(No title) University switchboard operator is arrested for selling cut rate overseas calls using a blue box</b>
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Abstract	University switchboard operator is arrested for selling cut rate overseas calls using a blue box.
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Untitled  
The Associated Press

November 1, 1979, Thursday, AM cycle

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BYLINE: By TOM KELLY, Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: NEW YORK

BODY:

A college switchboard operator is accused of bilking the telephone company of more than \$1 million over four years by selling cut-rate overseas calls that avoided the billing process.

Robert Dunlap, 36, of Manhattan, allegedly netted \$100,000 from the scheme which employed several persons to sell the cut-rate calls to businessmen.

New York Telephone Co. said the average cost of an out-of-country call is \$3 per minute or \$45 for 15 minutes. Dunlap allegedly offered the calls for as little as \$5 for 15 minutes.

Dunlap, a 10-year employee at New York University, earned \$15,000 a year as a night-shift switchboard operator but drove a \$25,000 sports car, authorities said.

Businessmen who used his service would call Dunlap at the NYU switchboard in Washington Square and he would then place the call to any part of the world, authorities said.

He placed the calls by using a "blue box" to circumvent telephone company billing devices, authorities said.

"It was a classic blue box scheme," said a spokesman for the Manhattan district attorney's office.

The "blue box" is an electronic device that allows the caller to dial toll-free 800 or 555 exchanges and then keep the line open to dial another number once the original conversation is ended.

It was during a routine check that telephone company investigators noted that the university was logging an exceptional number of long-distance information calls that lasted up to an hour.

"We have telephone company printouts," said an investigator for the district attorney. "We determined who the switchboard operator on duty was and we had the telephone company monitor the board."

They moved in last Monday and arrested Dunlap at work.

Harriet Norris, a spokeswoman for New York Telephone, said that after the criminal charges against Dunlap are resolved, the company may seek restitution from those who took advantage of the cut-rate calls.

Officials said Dunlap had turned over all his records and was "giving his cooperation."

Dunlap, who lives in Greenwich Village, was described by neighbors as a "bit of a recluse." A university spokesman termed him "a very nice, cooperative fellow."

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Dunlap was charged with theft of services and possession of burglar tools (the blue box).

He was released without bail pending a hearing Nov. 26.