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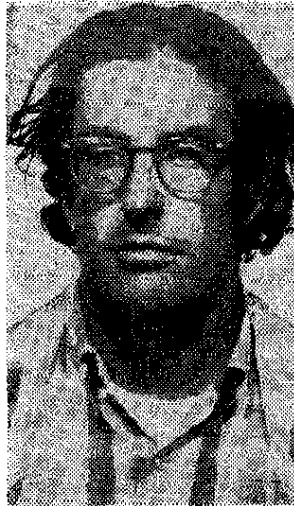
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Captain Crunch's Story

By Rick Carroll



DRAPER, ALIAS CRUNCH
'I've got to fight'

Volkswagen bus packed with complex electronic gear, stopped at various phone booths, and telephoned New York, London, Paris, Moscow and other places around the world—all, it is claimed, illegally.

"I don't do any of that now," he confided. He sounded sincere.

"Anything I did," he said, "was just for the pure knowledge. I'm a diddler, you know what I mean. I like to know how things work.

"I'm very curious to know where I'll land when I throw a 2600 down the line."

A "2600" is the musical tone phone shrieks duplicate either by whistling, tape recording or by using an illegal device known as a "blue box." All open access to the phone company's

truck lines, enabling free calls anywhere.

The 2600 cycle per second signal also is the key to the Captain's name. A phreak once discovered that toy whistles that came in boxes of Captain Crunch cereal gave out a perfect 2600-c.p.s. signal.

"I knew about the whistle," Crunch said, but he didn't know how he got stuck with the nickname.

LIFE

Crunch — or Draper — was born March 3, 1943, the son of a now-retired Air Force career officer who works in the San Jose post office.

As a boy, the Captain traveled a lot, attended four different high schools in four years and "always tinkered around with electricity and electronics."

He joined the Air Force, served a four-year hitch as a radar maintenance man and learned all he could about the Air Force's phone system.

"It never worked right," he said.

Honorably discharged in 1968, he went to San Jose "because the whole environment is electronics," enrolled in college electronics classes and got a job as an electronics technician.

About the same time, he said, he found out about "blue boxes," those magical devices that make a private toy out of the multi-billion-dollar phone company.

"I got called once by a blind kid who told me the

call was free. I couldn't understand why it was free. He told me about the blue box.

"I was interested."

GADGET

A "blue box" is an electronic gadget that duplicates the phone company's multi-frequency signals, enabling phreaks to control the long-distance switching system and call free anywhere in the world.

"It's just like fooling a vending machine into giving you a candy bar for a No. 14 washer," Crunch said.

His consuming passion for electronics led to involvement and soon, he said, he knew as much as schooled phone company engineers, if not more.

Crunch doesn't think of himself as a criminal.

"I've never had any intention to rip off the phone company. My motivation is strictly electronics," he said.

CASE

That seemed to remind him of his own forthcoming prosecution. He bit a big hunk of cuticle off his now-retired dialing finger.

"I feel like I've got six weeks to live," he said.

"I'm too busy to fool around with phones."

"I've got three jobs. I work for a Palo Alto electronics firm as an engineer. I've got one-third ownership in my own company, designing circuits.

"And," he said, "I work nights as a disc jockey for an FM station — only don't say where, OK?"

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