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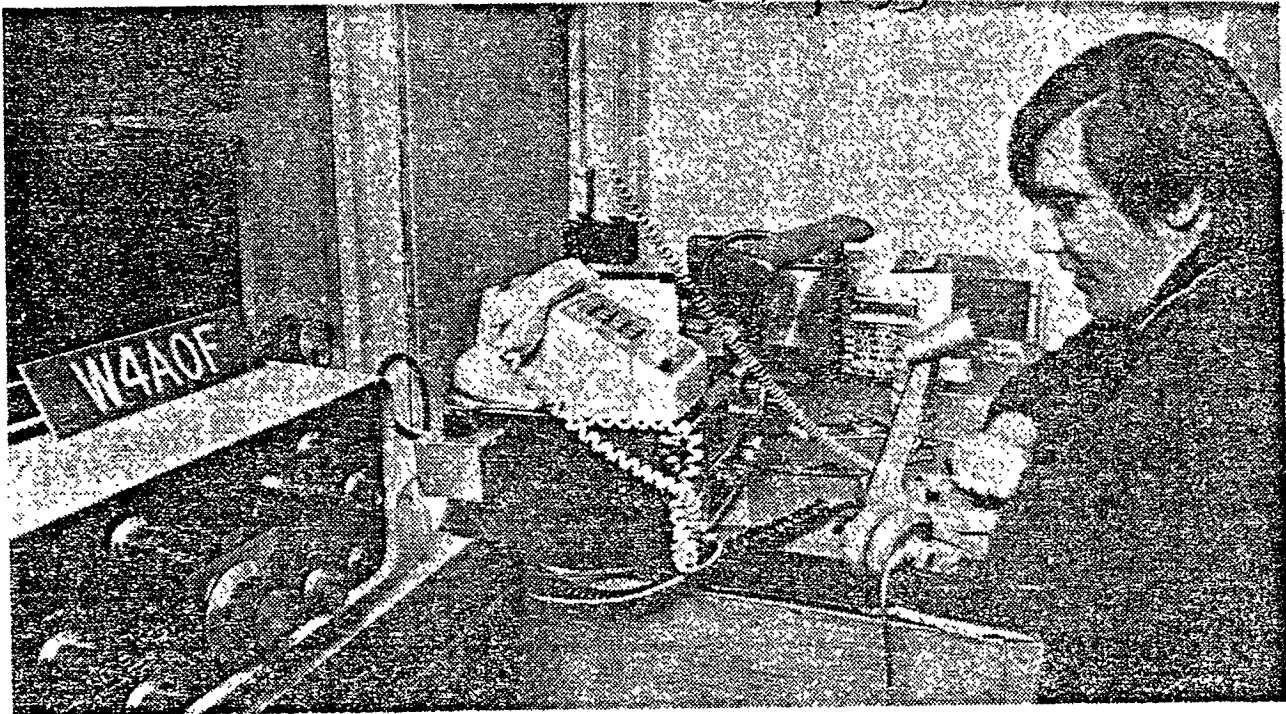
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Abstract	Blind phone phreak Elton "Al" Hall arrested and charged with blue box fraud.
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Source	An anonymous phone phreak

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Elton Hall, who's made hundreds of illegal calls, discussed his arrest with ham radio friends

It's a Helluva Hobby'

By Maitland Zane

Another "phonephreak" — one of those space age ripoff artists who give Ma Bell nightmares — has been busted here.

However, Elton (Al) Hall, 32, is different from other phonephreaks — he's legally blind.

Since last year he had admittedly used what he calls a "blue box" to make hundreds, perhaps thousands, of free telephone calls abroad.

Not for profit, Hall said yesterday, but just for the fun of it, he has arranged conference calls so friends in as many as six foreign cities can chat.

"It's a helluva hobby," Hall said. "You have the feeling of power, of having the world at your fingertips."

Some would call his hobby an obsession — his idea of a

Last Voyages of The Liner France

Paris

The luxury liner France will make two farewell transatlantic cruises in October and will end its career in regular service on October 25 in Cannes, the French Line announced yesterday.

The company said earlier it was withdrawing the world's largest passenger liner from service because the government has decided

to stop its subsidy.

The ship will leave its home port, Le Havre, for the last time on October 11, the announcement said, and sail to New York in six days following the Labrador and Quebec coastline. On its return trip, the ship will take the southern route, calling at the Azores en route to Cannes.

Associated Press

special agent told me it was one of the most sophisticated he'd seen."

Hall played a tape recording of a call he set up between a Navy man stationed at a U.S. base near Yokohama and the sailor's mother in San Francisco.

Hall got into the international network by punching a button that produced the funny-sounding 2600-cycle-per-second tone. He then dialed a three-digit "international access code," and had a friendly chat with an English-speaking operator in Tokyo.

The operator connected him with the American sailor. A minute later Hall had the sailor's mother on another of his four lines. Shazam! He'd done another good deed.

Hall said he intends to fight the misdemeanor charge

The arresting officers, who had a warrant signed by Municipal Court Judge Mary Moran Pajalich, also seized some of Hall's electronic gear, 15 telephones

tor, with buttons like those on a push-button telephone.

He made the box himself with \$50 in legally-purchased parts.

"The telephone company

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"It's a helluva hobby," Hall said. "You have the feeling of power, of having the world at your fingertips."

Some would call his hobby an obsession — his idea of a fun weekend is a case of beer and 48 hours with a headset on conning international operators into thinking he's an international operator.

Hall, who lives with a roommate in a cavernous flat at 2219-A Market street, is a small-town boy from Kansas who has been a ham radio operator since high school days.

Most of his life he's wanted to be a telephone company technician or engineer or troubleshooter.

But Hall doesn't have a college degree. And he couldn't get a job because he's blind in one eye and has very poor vision in the other.

He has a legitimate business, Call Alert which sells telephone answering devices, tape recorders and mobile equipment.

But the law caught up with his illegal hobby on Tuesday.

Hall was charged with a misdemeanor fraud of possessing and illegally using a "multi-frequency generating device" — a blue box. He was released on his own recognizance.

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How was Hall found out?

"Basically," said a Pacific Telephone spokesman, "a bluebox enables someone to electronically bypass the toll system."

Phonephreaks are hard to catch, the spokesman said — only seven have been run down in the Bay Area since last December.

They're found out by what the spokesman called "abnormalities in computer records."

If Ma Bell suspects a blue box is being used, then a "2600-cycle register" is put on the suspect's line.

Conversations aren't recorded at that stage, just the 2600-cycle tone, which is supposed to be used only between phone company operators.

Later, if the investigation shows a continual use of the 2600-cycle tone, a wiretap (legal under state and federal laws, according to the spokesman) is put on the line.

Hall's blue box is the size of a pack of cigarettes and looks like a pocket calcula-

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