



Exploding The Phone

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Bibliographic Cover Sheet

Title **Hundreds of Telephone Calls Tied to Blue Box, 9 Students**

Publication *Plain Dealer*

Date 1971-05-08

Abstract Nine Case Western Reserve University students arrested for using blue box fraud.

Keywords blue box; Ohio Bell Telephone Co. (OBTCO); Case Western Reserve University (CWRU); Zigmond T. Stevens (arrested); Robert M. Stark (arrested); Gerald G. Coleman (arrested); Kenneth M. Deemer (arrested); Stephen A. Kelbick (arrested); Thomas Sasena (arrested); Kenneth L. Streat (arrested); Douglas S. Andrew (arrested); Myron A. Washil, Jr. (arrested)

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PLAIN DEALER
MAY 8, 1971

Hundreds of Toll-Free Calls Tied to Blue Box, 9 Students

Nine college students, arrested for making several hundred free long-distance calls by using a homemade electronic device, might find some comfort in the words of an Ohio Bell Telephone official.

He called the small metal box with its rows of buttons one of the most technologically sophisticated devices of that kind he has ever seen.

The nine — all engineering and science students at Case Western Reserve University — were arrested late Thursday night at Tipton House, 2955 Murray Hill Road, by Cleveland Heights police accompanied by Ohio Bell security men.

THEY WERE charged with fraudulent use of telephone equipment and electronic devices and released yesterday morning on \$500 personal bond. They will appear in Cleveland Heights Municipal Court Tuesday morning.

Those arrested were Zigmund T. Stevens, 19, 3540 E.

75th Street; Robert M. Stark, 10, Baltimore, Md.; Gerald G. Coleman, 18, Arlington, Va.; Kenneth M. Deemer, 19, Cortland, Pa.; Stephen A. Kellick, 18, Baldwin, N.Y.; Thomas Sasena, 19, Irwin, Pa.; Kenneth L. Street, 18, Baltimore, Md.; Douglas S. Andrew, 18, Cincinnati; and Myron A. Washil Jr., 18, Pittsburgh, Pa.

THOMAS STRAYER, Ohio Bell general security and audit supervisor, said the instrument and others like it — called blue boxes — work by emulating the touch tones Ohio Bell uses.

He said blue-box users usually call long-distance information in the city they want and then — using the box — switch their call from an information circuit to a trunk line. Then they push the tone buttons to get the number they wish.

He said Ohio Bell became aware that an illegal device was being used in this area about four weeks ago when a computer readout indicat-

ed a number of calls with no completion time.

ALSO CONFISCATED along with the blue box were copies of a newspaper story on the arrest of other blue-box users, blueprints for designing the device, five illegally installed telephones, address books, a tape recorder and tapes.

Strayer said students apparently had "dialed" certain phone numbers on the blue box and recorded them on tapes. This allowed others to make free calls without actually having the box in their possession, he theorized.

He said another similar device had been confiscated in Cleveland about four months ago, but that there had been insufficient evidence to press charges.

Karl B. McEachron, dean of Case Institute of Technology, said the college had no plans to take disciplinary actions against the youths.

"This is a matter between the phone company and the students," he said.

PHONY BUSINESS—Thomas Strayer of Ohio Bell holds the blue box in his hand while he gazes at blueprints.

Plain Dealer Photo (Charles Harris)

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I depend on incoming calls for work assignments. I have been without telephone service five days. Reports to Ohio Bell bring no repair service. What can I do?—Mrs. E.A.K.

A spokesman said your phone trouble has been corrected in the central office and outside. They will keep in touch with you to see if it stays in working order and are giving a seven-day credit on your bill.

"OHIO BELL
HATES ME..."

THEY WON'T
LET ME ROOST ON THEIR LINES.

PLAIN DEALER
MAY 8, 1971

Since November a pole has been on our tree lawn at 2992 W. 12th Street belonging either to Ohio Bell or CEI. They both deny the pole is theirs.—Mrs. L.A.

CEI said it definitely was not their pole and said it must belong to Ohio Bell. Ohio Bell said it definitely was not their pole and said it must belong to CEI. Ohio Bell removed the pole.

PLAIN DEALER
MAY 8, 1971

Rural Phone System Aid OK'd

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Nixon yesterday signed a bill to provide loan funds for the development of rural telephone systems.

The bill sets up a rural telephone bank with the government holding 51% of the stock and financing it in the next 10 years at the rate of about \$80 million a year. It will help rural telephone companies to borrow money at a rate somewhere between the 2% now charged by the Rural Electrification Administration and the market rate, depending upon their ability to pay.