



Exploding The Phone

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Bibliographic Cover Sheet

Title Letter from deButts to Kelley regarding blue box interception of FBI telephone calls

Date 1975-07-31

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Abstract Letter from John D. deButts, chairman of the board, AT&T, to Clarence M. Kelley, Director, FBI regarding blue box interception of FBI telephone calls. "This refers to your recent letter to me concerning the use of a blue box to monitor telephone calls in the San Francisco area. We are aware of this blue box capability which can occur under certain wiring configurations in our traffic verification trunks and less secure features are applied. The Bell System was alerted to this vulnerability sometime ago, and the security features to prevent it were disseminated. Unfortunately, due to a unique isolated situation in a particular switching office serving a portion of the San Francisco subscribers, the security safeguards built into the circuitry failed. This condition has been eliminated by a modification to ensure it is secure. We are conducting an expeditious review of the verification trunks throughout the system to ensure that they are compatible with our security recommendations which prevent unauthorized access...."

Keywords John D. deButts; Clarence M. Kelley; FBI; blue box; autoverify; verification; John Draper

Source Anonymous

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C O P Y

Separate Copy to
H.E. Brown
W.B. Cagle
K.D. Hopper
I.M. Ross

July 31, 1975

Dear Mr. Kelley:

This refers to your recent letter to me concerning the use of a blue box to monitor telephone calls in the San Francisco area.

We are aware of this blue box capability which can occur under certain wiring configurations in our traffic verification trunks unless secure features are applied. The Bell System was alerted to this vulnerability some time ago, and the security features to prevent it were disseminated. Unfortunately, due to a unique isolated situation in a particular switching office serving a portion of the San Francisco subscribers, the security safeguard built into the circuitry failed.

This condition has been eliminated by a modification to ensure it is secure.

We are conducting an expeditious review of the verification trunks throughout the System to ensure that they are compatible with our security recommendations which prevents unauthorized access.

Mr. J. F. Doherty, Director of Corporate Security at AT&T has already been in contact with Mr. Jay Cochran, Jr. of the F.B.I. Laboratory. Mr. Doherty will keep Mr. Cochran advised of the results of this review.

I want to assure you that we share your concern regarding this incident and took immediate steps to correct it. Protection of the secrecy of communications is a paramount concern of ours in connection with the service we render.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by
J. D. deButts

Mr. Clarence M. Kelley, Director
United States Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Washington, D.C. 20535