



# ***Exploding The Phone***

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Bibliographic Cover Sheet

**Title**            **Article on arrests by the Bell Telephone Co. of Pennsylvania**

**Date**            1971-09-28

**Author(s)**     UPI

**Abstract**       Kenneth Spacil, Robert Helms, Francis Mitchell, and Mrs. Helen Williams arrested for blue box fraud in PA. Spacil, Moore 19 and 18, Helms 25, Williams 40. Mitchell was a 7-year long-lines employee, Williams was a toll traffic operator. 17-yo college student also being sought. William Cashel, president, says company is pushing for prosecution "for the first time in its history because 'serious harm and damage could come to the phone system'."

**Keywords**     Kenneth Spacil (arrested); Robert Helms (arrested); Francis Mitchell (long lines employee, arrested); Helen Williams (Mrs., toll operator, arrested)

**Notes**          UPI newswire article.

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U R G E N T

(PHREAKS)

(PHILADELPHIA)---THE BELL TELEPHONE COMPANY OF PENNSYLVANIA TODAY SAID IT PLANS TO PRESS FOR "FULL PROSECUTION" OF FOUR SELF-STYLED "PHONE PHREAKS" CHARGED WITH MAKING THOUSANDS OF FREE LONG-DISTANCE CALLS WITH THE AID OF AN ILLEGAL ELECTRONIC DEVICE KNOWN AS A "BLUE BOX."

ARRESTED LAST NIGHT IN CHESTER AND MONTGOMERY COUNTIES WERE 19-YEAR-OLD KENNETH SPACIL OF GLEN MOORE...18-YEAR-OLD ROBERT HELMS OF DOWNINGTOWN...FRANCIS MITCHELL, ABOUT 25, OF DEVON...AND MRS. HELEN WILLIAMS, ABOUT 40, OF WEST CHESTER.

MITCHELL IS A SEVEN-YEAR LONG LINES DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEE OF AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY AT WAYNE AND MRS. WILLIAMS IS EMPLOYED WITH BELL AS A TOLL TRAFFIC OPERATOR AT THE COMPANY'S WEST CHESTER OFFICE.

A 17-YEAR-OLD COLLEGE STUDENT IS ALSO BEING SOUGHT IN CONNECTION WITH THE ALLEGED SCHEME.

BELL'S HEADQUARTERS SECURITY CHIEF CARL TEETS SAID THE FOUR HAD FORMED...IN HIS WORDS..."A FRATERNITY" WHICH USED THE ILLEGAL DEVICE TO ...AS HE PUT IT..."BYPASS THE LONG-DISTANCE OPERATOR AND USE TOLL LINES FREE OF CHARGE." THE BLUE BOXES ARE ABOUT POSTCARD-SIZE... TWO TO THREE INCHES DEEP...WITH A SERIES OF 12 OR 13 PUSH BUTTONS ON THEIR FACES.

COMPANY PRESIDENT WILLIAM CASHEL SAID THE USE OF SUCH DEVICES WAS FIRST ACKNOWLEDGED BY BELL AS LONG AS 10 YEARS AGO WHEN THEY WERE DEVELOPED BY WHAT WERE REFERRED TO AS "INDIVIDUAL EXPERIMENTERS."

IN RECENT YEARS...ACCORDING TO CASHEL...THE PROBLEM HAS GROWN MORE SERIOUS WITH LARGER NUMBERS OF PEOPLE INVOLVED. THE COMPANY IS PUSHING FOR PROSECUTION FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ITS HISTORY BECAUSE... IN HIS WORDS..."SERIOUS HARM AND DAMAGE COULD COME TO THE PHONE SYSTEM."

PRESENT STATE STATUTES PROHIBITING THE MANUFACTURE AND USE OF ELECTRICAL DEVICES FOR THEFT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS CIRCUITS CARRY A PENALTY OF A 500-DOLLAR FINE AND ONE YEAR IN JAIL.

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IN 2ND PGH READ IT XXX NIGHT IN CHESTER COUNTY WERE, ETC.  
DELETING REFERENCE TO MONTGOMERY COUNTY)..