



# ***Exploding The Phone***

db618

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Bibliographic Cover Sheet

Title	<b>Article on arrests by the Bell Telephone Co. in Pennsylvania #3</b>
Date	1971-09-28
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Abstract	Kenneth Spacil, Robert Helms, Francis Mitchell, and Mrs. Helen Williams arrested for blue box fraud in PA.
Keywords	Kenneth Spacil (arrested); Robert Helms (arrested); Francis Mitchell (long lines employee, arrested); Helen Williams (Mrs., toll operator, arrested); William Cashel
Notes	UPI newswire story, basically verbatim version of db617.

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Phones 9-28w

By THOMAS B. MIECE JR.

PHILADELPHIA UPI - The

Bell Telephone Co. said today four persons were arrested in Pennsylvania in connection with a nationwide crackdown on organized "phone phreaks," who use an electronic gimmick to make illegal toll calls.

Carl Teets, headquarters security manager for the Bell Telephone Co. of Pennsylvania, estimated the ring which he said had a nucleus of 50 to 60 persons had cost telephone companies nationwide about one-half million dollars in the past two years.

Teets said in addition to the four arrested Monday night in raids on homes in Chester County, two other suspects were taken into custody in Memphis, Tenn., in a similar case.

William S. Cashel, president of Bell of Pennsylvania, said 57 other cases were under investigation in 14 states and at least one foreign country, Great Britain.

Those arrested in Pennsylvania included Francis E. Mitchell, about 27, Devon, Pa., identified as a seven-year employee of the long lines department of American Telephone and Telegraph AT&T, Bell's parent firm.

Another was Mrs. Helen Williams, 43, West Chester, Pa., a toll traffic operator at Bell's West Chester office.

The other two were Kenneth M. Spacil, 18, Glen Moore, Pa., and Robert Helms, also 18, Downingtown, Pa.

Authorities said they were also seeking a 17-year-old college student who was not identified.

Teets said the ring, which he estimated expanded to about 200 to 250 people nationwide, used an illegal electronic device known as a "blue box."

Teets described the device, which he said can be illegally manufactured for about \$20 to \$25, as a multiple frequency tone generator which allows the user to bypass long distance operators and use toll lines without paying.

Teets refused to elaborate on how the device was used, saying he did not want to alert persons to its possible illegal use.

He said the telephone company was aware such devices had been in existence for the last 10 years but they were not concerned until last year when investigation disclosed persons were grouping together to use it.

He said the inventors of the devices were "quite intelligent," and usually persons with electronic and engineering backgrounds.

He said the organized groups, who dubbed themselves the "phone phreaks," would share their knowledge with others, frequently through lengthy long distance calls, and expand the alleged ring.

Teets estimated the illegal use cost Bell of Pennsylvania some \$2,000 a month for the past two years.

He said in the past, the devices were made mainly by college students and people who had the necessary equipment and knowledge "just for kicks."

He said one of these early illegal inventors "simply enjoyed calling his girl friend, who lived one-half block away, by way of Mexico City."