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Title **4 'Phone Phreak' Suspects Seized as Dial Dodgers**

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Abstract Kenneth Spacil, Robert Helms, Francis Mitchell, and Mrs. Helen Williams arrested for blue box fraud in PA. All were released on between \$1K and \$5K bail for an 10/8/1971 hearing.

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

Notes Date estimated based on other records on same subject.

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4 'Phone Phreak' Suspects Seized as Dial Dodgers

By GEORGE MURRAY

Of The Inquirer Staff

Four persons, including two Bell Telephone employees, were arrested Tuesday as self-styled "phone phreaks" who allegedly used home-made electronic gadgets to obtain thousands of dollars in phone services for free.

Bell officials explained that the four are among hundreds of persons being sought by the company for illegally using electronic "blue boxes" to circumvent normal dialing and pay procedures for long-distance calls.

A "blue box," it was explained, can be made at the cost of \$20 to \$25.

The device emits "beeps" similar to those by Bell in its calls, allowing the illegal user to bypass long-distance operators and use toll lines without paying.

Company officials refused to describe the device in any more detail.

Aside from calling long distance, "phone

phreaks" can use the "blue box" for local calls, merely for calling a friend down the street, but putting the call through an operator in another state or another country, thereby making it long distance.

The four arrested, who were released on between \$1,000 and \$5,000 bail for an Oct. 8 hearing, were identified as Kenneth M. Spacial, 19, RD 2, Glenmore; Francis E. Mitchell, 25, of Conestoga rd., Devon; Robert Helms, 18, of Chestnut st., Downingtown and Mrs. Helen Williams, 38, of Burke rd., West Chester.

Mitchell has been an employee of the long lines department of the telephone company at Wayne for seven years. Mrs. Williams is a Bell toll traffic operator in Bell's West Chester office.

William S. Cashel, Bell president, said the group, which calls itself "phone phreaks," has cost the phone company about \$500,000 during the past two years.