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Title **Free Phone-Call Scheme Charged to 4 in Chester Co.**

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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)

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Free Phone-Call Scheme Charged to 4 in Chester Co.

Four persons were arrested by Chester County detectives last night on charges of taking part in a scheme which allowed free telephone calls to be made all over the world.

Two of those arrested are telephone company employees who are accused of possessing devices used to cut in on hundreds of long-distance circuits and bypass the phone company's billing equipment.

Carl Teets, security manager for Bell Telephone Co. of Pennsylvania, said it is estimated the calls made by the suspects cost the company about \$2,000 in tolls since January.

'Blue Box'

Teets said bypassing of equipment is accomplished with the use of what is commonly known as a "blue box," which has 12 buttons, similar to those on pushbutton telephones. The boxes are made in varying sizes and are able to tie-in with long distance lines without the use of wires, he said.

Use of the boxes, Teets said, are estimated to cost the Bell System across the country at least \$500,000 a year in lost revenue.

Teets said those who use the boxes are known as "Phone Phreaks."

"It's a thrill type of experience for them," Teets told a press conference here. "They want to see if they can call Moscow or anywhere across the world without going through the operator. It's a 'Let's try to beat the system' type of game."

Those Arrested

Those arrested at their

homes last night on warrants prepared by Chester County District Attorney Norman J. Pine are:

Mrs. Helen Williams, about 40, of the 1300 Burke road, West Chester, a Bell Telephone Co. operator; Francis E. Mitchell, 27, of the 300 block Conestoga road, Devon, an employee of the American Telephone and Telegraph Co.; Kenneth M. Spacil, 18, of Barnestown road, Glenmore, north of Downingtown; and Robert Helms, about 20, of the 209 block Chestnut st., Downingtown.

Mrs. Williams and Mitchell are charged with conspiracy and with making, possessing and transferring a device designed for the theft of telecommunications service and for other purposes.

Bell Employee

Mrs. Williams is employed in Bell's West Chester office and Mitchell works for AT&T's facility in Wayne.

Spacil is charged with conspiracy; falsely impersonating officers and persons privately employed; making fraudulent telephone calls, and interception of telephone communications.

Helms is charged with conspiracy, making fraudulent telephone calls, and the interception of telephone calls.

All were arraigned last night before District Justice John Catapese of Coatesville, who held them in bail for a hearing at 11 A. M. on Oct. 8. Bail was set at \$5,000 for Mitchell, Spacil and Helms, and at \$1,000 for Mrs. Williams.

Boy Also Arrested

Sharpe said that a large amount of electronic equipment was seized in the homes of those arrested.

He said a juvenile boy was arrested last night at his home in Pottstown by Montgomery County authorities in connection with the Chester County arrests.