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Bibliographic Cover Sheet

Title           **Undetectable Tap; Phone Company Can Hear Any Call, Any Time, says 'Crunch'**

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Author(s)     Cronk, Michael

Abstract       Draper claims AT&T has created a remote wiretapping system called "REMOB".

Keywords     John Draper; REMOB; Paul McCloskey

Source         Anonymous

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WHAT'S DOING

PRESS CLIPPINGS

# Undetectable tap

*Roger Carl*  
*can it be done?*  
*ker H*

# Phone company can hear any call, any time, says 'Crunch'

By MICHAEL CRONK  
Staff Writer

American Telephone and Telegraph Co. has developed a computer system that gives it the capability to listen undetected to any phone conversation in the country, claims John Draper, the former Mountain View "Phone Phreak."

AT&T spokesmen deny the claim. "The capability does exist," asserted Draper at a recent press conference. "It was demonstrated to me, and it really blew me out."

Draper, 34, who now works as a consultant to businesses who want to reduce their phone bills, said an AT&T computer system in Iowa had been programmed to bug telephone calls thousands of miles away undetected by the tapped parties.

Because it cannot be detected, the remote observation capacity is different from other bugging devices available to the telephone company, he said, including no warning beepers and requiring no tapping of the line.

"With this one, all you've got to do is dial," he said. Asked about the claim, AT&T spokesman John Trovato said, "To my knowledge, no such device is being tested in Iowa." He said AT&T has "no such system" and "no such capabilities."

Gene Zadoff, public information officer for Pacific Telephone, was more emphatic in his reaction to Draper's claim.

"It's preposterous, ludicrous, laughable," said Zadoff.

Zadoff said the phone company has "no capability as Draper describes it" and would not get into any activity that would be illegal or violate the public's right to privacy.

"We in the phone company believe more in privacy than the average citizen," said Zadoff, who noted that telephone companies are among the most closely watched and regulated businesses in the country.

In Washington, D.C., Randolph Young, chief of the Federal Communications Commission's telephone tariff division, said, "We're not aware of any centralized ability of the telephone company to tap a line, but obviously they have some capability in this regard."

Draper said the computerized "remote observation" system in Iowa was demonstrated to him by other "Phone Phreaks," who had accidentally stumbled onto the telephone number that gives access to it. The access number has since been changed, he said.

He claimed that any person who knows the Iowa access number can dial it, then dial any telephone number in the country and eavesdrop without detection on conversation on that line.

Draper is also known as "Captain Crunch" because he once used whistles offered as prizes in cereal boxes to bypass phone company billing systems. His skill at such activities has made him something of a folk hero among other self-styled "Phone Phreaks" — people who delight in playing with telephones, often to circumvent charges.

Draper pleaded innocent last November in Pennsylvania to charges of theft of trade secrets and criminal conspiracy against the telephone company. The case has not yet come to trial. He is currently on probation after four months in jail on a 1976 conviction for similar activities.

"Captain Crunch" said he is preparing a report on the system; and will ask Rep. Paul McCloskey, R-Menlo Park, to conduct investigative hearings. A press aide for McCloskey said this week in Washington that the congressman's office had not received anything from Draper as of yet, but that they would certainly take a close look "at whatever Draper might offer them."

The penetration of telephone communications systems have broad implications considering that many large computer systems are on line with telephone systems.

Any telephone in the world is a potential source of

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WHAT'S DOING

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compromising that system," said Donn Parker, of the Stanford Research Institute.

Parker, an expert in the field of privacy and computer security systems, said that a perpetrator by using a telephone becomes "geographically independent" and anything he can do to the computer within 50 feet, he can do within 50,000 miles.

Parker added that a person would have to have special knowledge and skill to penetrate a system, and there aren't many people who can do it, except perhaps a few phone phreaks.

Data processing has become one of the a favorite training programs in prisons, Parker pointed out, and that came to the attention of the staff of Sen. Abraham Ribicoff, who has authored a comprehensive computer crime bill.



JOHN DRAPER  
... 'Capt. Crunch'

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