



Exploding The Phone

db824

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Bibliographic Cover Sheet

Title **Press Release of Letter from Oklahoma College Student**

Date 1974-12-11

Abstract Letter written by 19-year-old Oklahoma College student relating his unfortunate experience being caught for electronic toll fraud.

Keywords black box; telephone fraud; blue box; FBI; Letter from Oklahoma college student

Notes Probably originally attached to db823; date taken from that document. 1 sheet of paper, both sides.

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A former college student in Oklahoma, who was placed on probation following conviction of telephone fraud, wrote the following letter which was published in a student newspaper:

"To whom it may concern:

"I am, or was a college student just like you. I have always been a good student. In fact, by the time I was 19, I had completed a five-year electrical engineering course and was one year into the master's program. School was easy for me and I had plenty of spare time. I have an inquisitive mind and among other things, I became interested in the telephone switching network.

"It occurred to me that with a little study I could beat the system. That was my first mistake.

"I experimented until I developed a device commonly called a 'black box' which allowed me to receive free incoming long distance calls. From there I progressed to a 'blue box' which allowed me to place calls and never be billed. Throughout my experimentation, I felt I was really putting something over on the telephone company. I talked to others around the country who were doing the same thing. We all thought we had a good thing going.

"Then it happened. A knock on my door and FBI agents with a search warrant confiscated my 'black box,' 'blue box' and other equipment and records I had relating to my fraudulent phone activities.

"I was scared. The realization of what was happening left me completely shocked.

"I was not arrested, but I soon found out why -- that was coming later.

"I was indicted by a federal grand jury, arrested and put in jail because I couldn't make a \$5,000 bond.

"After I spent 11 days in jail, my father was able to raise the money for my bond and I was released pending trial, but my troubles weren't over.

"I went through an arraignment before a federal judge and a trial date was set. I was frightened, confused and wondering how I could have gotten myself into all this trouble.

"I entered a plea of not guilty which I later changed to guilty. I knew I didn't have a chance.

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"I was guilty and the case against me was overwhelming.

"I was still free on bond awaiting sentencing. It was a terrible time, not knowing if I would go to prison or just what would happen. Then six weeks later I was sentenced.

"I was lucky. I was sentenced to five years' probation. This means that I cannot afford to get into any kind of trouble or I go to prison. I must report to a probation officer every month and I must have a job and keep it.

"I am writing this letter on the chance that my experience will prevent others from making the same mistake I did. Not only with electronic devices but by using fraudulent telephone company credit card numbers, placing calls and charging them to third numbers or any other type of fraud.

"I know it looks easy but you will get caught. Look at me. My college days are ruined, at least for now. I have lost money on bond and other expenses. Plus the anxiety and fear. I hope you don't make the same mistake. I can only hope you value from my experience and don't do as I have done because I'm sorry."

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