



# ***Exploding The Phone***

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Bibliographic Cover Sheet

Title           **Newspaper reports monitoring by Bell**

Publication    *Jackson Citizen Patriot*

Date            1975-02-02

Author(s)     UPI

V/I/P           p. 1

Abstract       UPI newswire story concerning the St. Louis Post-Dispatch scoop on the AT&T toll fraud surveillance program.

Keywords      St. Louis; New York; Detroit; Miami; Los Angeles; Newark, NJ; wiretapping; William P. Mullane, Jr.; Greenstar

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# *Newspaper reports monitoring by Bell*

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (UPI) — The Bell Telephone System for six years randomly monitored more than 30 million long-distance calls originating in six cities and secretly tape-recorded parts of at least 1.5 million calls for analysis in New York, according to a newspaper report.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch said in its Sunday editions the highly secretive program was to combat electronic toll call frauds. However, the newspaper said, only a tiny fraction of the calls listened to and recorded were ever confirmed by the company as fraudulent.

The six cities were St. Louis, New York, Detroit, Miami, Los Angeles and Newark, N.J., the Post-Dispatch said.

The monitoring program covered six years and ended in the spring of 1970, when those Bell executives involved were warned to purge their files of any reference to the program and destroy any materials relating to it, the newspaper said.

The story quoted a "source with knowledge of the internal operations of the Bell system" as saying the executives who ran the program believed the company was within its legal rights, but were afraid the company's image might be damaged if it became public.

"From the beginning they analyzed this very carefully, and decided that if it ever were necessary to reveal the

existence of this equipment in order to prosecute a toll fraud case, they would simply decline to prosecute," the source was quoted as saying.

A good percentage of the tape recordings involved segments of from 30 seconds to 90 seconds from the time a call was dialed, but in several hundred thousand instances entire conversations were recorded, the newspaper said.

The story said the program was unknown to many high-ranking Bell executives even in areas where it was in effect.