



Exploding The Phone

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Bibliographic Cover Sheet

Title **Phone Freaks Can Invade Your Privacy**

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Abstract NSA memo describing phone phreak ability to use verification to tap telephone calls. From January 1976 interview of two phone phreaks with FBI in Los Angeles, CA.

Keywords NSA; FBI; Los Angeles, CA; verification; autoverification; wire tapping

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PHONE FREAKS CAN INVADe YOUR PRIVACY (U)

Among the several areas of possible COMSEC interest developed during an investigation of Phone Freak activities is the capability to monitor telephone calls. Monitoring can be accomplished by accessing either the maintenance switchboard or the verification operator. In some systems this can be accomplished automatically and in others it must be done through a switchman or operator. To monitor automatically via busy verification switches only requires knowledge of the special number and the capability to convince them that you are a telephone company employee with a legitimate need for access to the switchboard. Gaining access through a switchman or operator is not difficult since the call is coming in on a telephone company line, they assume the caller is an employee.

Once access to the switchboard is gained, the intruder dials the last four digits of the number he wants to monitor and if a call is in progress he can listen in without either party knowing it. (Although there may be a slight "click"). If a call is not in progress the number would be "busy" to a calling party and the subscriber would not get dial tone if he tried to make a call. Therefore, monitoring can only be done while a call is in progress. But the intruder can remain in the switchboard and frequently call the number he wants to monitor.

While the Phone Freaks claim they do this "just to be able to do it" or for some self serving purpose, the capability discloses another potential source of intelligence.

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