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Bibliographic Cover Sheet

Title **Santa Barbara is Still OK; A-Blast Report Just Hoax**

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Abstract Unidentified prankster cut into long distance calls to say that there was a nuclear explosion in Santa Barbara.

Keywords Santa Barbara, CA; General Telephone Co.; nuclear explosion; blow-by box; Santa Barbara nuclear hoax

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SANTA BARBARA IS STILL OK; A-BLAST REPORT JUST HOAX

A prankster with what the General Telephone Co. called "some technical knowledge" caused widespread fear that a nuclear accident had destroyed Santa Barbara and its surroundings Sunday.

A telephone company spokesman said the prankster evidently used a device which intercepted certain calls made by direct distance dialing, and represented himself either as an emergency operator or Marine Corps officer.

The spokesman said the man told the long-distance callers "There has been a nuclear explosion on Santa Barbara and all telephone lines are out."

Apparently, the spokesman added, the hoax was only conducted for

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HOAX

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about 30 minutes during the early afternoon.

But the effects continued throughout the day, with alarmed calls to General Telephone Co. and to Santa Barbara police from as far away as Florida and Alaska, demanding details of the "tragedy", and asking, in some cases, if World War III had begun.

Police and telephone experts were investigating the matter, but reported very little progress in identifying the perpetrator of the hoax—or even in finding out just how he did it, or where he hooked his equipment temporarily into the telephone system.

Electronics experts speculated that the prankster had used a device called a "blow-by" box and keyed it to the direct dialing frequency, to intercept the incoming calls.

But they admitted the interception could have been made "just about anywhere," and added that, unless the prank were attempted again, there is very little chance that the prankster or his method of operation will be determined.