



# ***Exploding The Phone***

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Abstract The First International Phone Phreak Convention is held in New York. Article describes the proceedings and attendees. The book "Basic Telephone Switching Systems" by David Talley was recommended at the convention. The Phreak Philm, showing three ways to make free phone calls, was shown.

Keywords phone phreaks; New York; Diplomat Hotel (New York, NY); blue box; black box; toll free loops; Agnew; red box (the Milhous); Answeroo; First International Phone Phreak Convention (FIPPC); Youth International Party Line (YIPL); Yippies; Al Bell (phone phreak); Basic Telephone Switching Systems (book by David Talley); David Talley (author); Signetics (company with info on tone oscillators); Abbie Hoffman; John Draper; Captain Crunch; Phreak Philm

Source An anonymous phone phreak

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# phone phreak-

**R**APING THE BOARD" is the name of the game. With the proper equipment, it seems, a handful of people could busy-out all the long distance circuits in the entire world and set Ma Bell on her earplug.

With such wetdreams of revenge on the phone company, phone phreaks from around the nation gathered on July 29 in the basement ballroom of New York's Hotel Diplomat. They were commemorating the completion of the first transcontinental telephone line between New York and San Francisco, on July 29, 1914, and they were doing it with a colloquium on blue boxes, black boxes, toll free loops, phone credit cards, the Agnew, the Milhous, the Answeroo, and all the various gadgets which could yet turn ATT into a public service. This was the First International Phone Phreak Convention, sponsored by the Youth International Party Line. Originally scheduled in Miami during the Democratic Convention, it was postponed and moved to New York where, Yippies said, the laws against phreaking are "full of loopholes." As it turned out, telephone history was made.

The Convention opened with a 20-minute film in black and white, soundtrack added. The first ten minutes featured a free-form story of how one guy got to hate the phone company. He expressed his hatred by eating telephone equipment. There was also a short scene of a girl playing with herself. It was unclear what this segment had to do with phones, but it was interesting anyway.

The second half of the film showed three different techniques of pay phone phreaking. An eleven-year-old boy wants to call home but doesn't want to use up his dime. So he goes to his local candy store and steals a package of gum. He puts one stick in his mouth as he carefully flattens out the foil

wrapper. He rubs it against the side of the pay phone until it is smooth and flat. Then he places it into a crack on the side of the phone and puts a penny into the *nickle* slot. That sets him a dial tone and he places the call. "This procedure works best on the old black pay phones," says the soundtrack, "but with a little extra care it can work on the new green phones."

Enters a lady in her thirties, who carries with her a portable, battery-operated cassette recorder with a recording of the dings and dongs a pay phone makes when you put your coins into it. Each *ding* is five cents and each *dong* is a quarter. So when the operator asks her for a dime, the lady turns on the recorder and gives her a "ding-ding." The operator hears the tones and places the calls. The same trick is used for larger sums, for example, a long distance call costing \$1.15—"dong-dong-dong-dong-ding-ding-ding."

Finally, a senior citizen phone phreak calls from a pay phone without any equipment other than a dime. She locates two phones next to one another. Then she picks up one of them and uses the dime to call the operator to place the call. The operator returns the dime, tells her how much money is required, and the old lady deposits it, putting the same dime repeatedly into the other telephone. Somehow that phone dings to the operator's satisfaction, but because it wasn't actually in use, it returns the dime immediately.

When the film ended, the crowd cheered, and the host for the rest of the activities, a certain Al Bell, took the podium. That's not his real name, but that's what it said on the New York Telephone badge he was wearing. Al passed out mimeographed sheets containing instructions on how to build a Black Box. This device, sometimes called a *Mute*, allows a person to re-

ceive free long-distance calls. The caller, using no equipment, does not get charged for the call. Next to the speaker's stand was a large cardboard-box model of the device which Bell pointed to as he explained the construction and operation of the device. "It's simpler than the one described in the June RAMPARTS," he said, "but it uses the same principle."

Following this primary lesson, three workshops commenced. In one, participants learned how to construct an "Answeroo," a telephone answering service that costs under ten dollars to build. Phone phreaks have used it to set up automatic conference lines so that many phreaks can talk together at the same time for free.

In a second group, the basics of the blue box were explained. The latter "is similar to a Touch-Tone phone, except that it uses different frequencies." With such a device a phreak can place a free call anywhere in the world. The leader of this workshop showed charts of several different circuits used in Blue Boxes, but he cautioned that their construction requires a basic knowledge of electronics. He recommended a book, *Basic Telephone Switching Systems* by David Talley, and reported that a company called Signetics had information on tone oscillators that are easy to build. Al Bell reminded the workshop these boxes are not to be used for illegal purposes; he said that he uses his for audio testing.

Thereupon two blind phone phreaks arrived. Al Bell greeted them, and they talked and laughed. One of them whistled a high-pitched note used in the Blue Box. The others joined in, and together they whistled the tones for several phone numbers in San Jose, London, and Moscow.

Meanwhile, Abbie Hoffman was holding forth in a legality workshop. He appealed for funds to help defend

by robert sherman

# out in phun city

John "Captain Crunch" Draper—the already legendary phone phreak whom Ma Bell has persecuted from one end of the continent to the other. He further made a pitch for the YIPL newsletter: "It is much safer than communicating by phone. Upcoming issues, he said, will feature circuits for scramblers, bug detectors, and a new device called the Red Box, and nicknamed

"Milhous." The latter he described as "simpler than a Blue Box, more complicated than a Black Box, and smaller than a breadbox."

Following the workshops, the convention returned to its *pièce de résistance*, the Phreak Philm. Most people had seen the first showing, however, and left, but not in anger. Although the Yippies had failed to deliver on their

pledge to have phone calls from phone phreaks the world over, a wonderful time was had by all—all, that is, except Ma Bell's Special Agents, who attended at the invitation of The Party Line. They watched in angry frustration, unable to do more than slow down imaginary phones on imaginary receivers and vow revenge for the Rape of the Board.

## perils and promise of pot

A New York dermatologist reports that marijuana smoking may cause acne and hair loss. Dr. Irwin Lubowe of the New York Medical College states that he has conducted studies on patients whose baldness or acne seems to be caused by heavy indulgence in the pleasures of pot—defined as "at least two joints a week." Dr. Lubowe told Zodiac News Service that he suspects that "tetrahydrocannabinol"—or "the"—is a poison which affects the skin. He said that a number of his patients recovered from their outbreaks of pimples, severe dandruff, and hair loss attacks shortly after they quit smoking weed.

On the other hand, four UCLA researchers have recently suggested that marijuana may be an effective treatment for glaucoma, the most common cause of blindness in the United States. The disease results from a build-up of fluid pressure inside the eyeball. The UCLA research team found that smoking grass decreases this fluid pressure for at least several hours.

In a related item, the Canadian Commission of Inquiry into the Non-Medical Use of Drugs reports that

pot has often been used to treat symptoms of the flu and the common cold. According to the Commission, "cannabis" was an active ingredient in at least 20 medical preparations until it was outlawed in the 1930s.

## gen. haines: high on the lord

If Gen. Creighton Abrams is approved for Army Chief of Staff, his number two man will be a certain Gen. Ralph E. Haines, currently responsible for all the ground troops of the continental United States. It is one of those typically American anomalies, for Gen. Haines, it seems, has evangelical as well as military aspirations. In recent months, he has been making numerous speaking tours around the nation—spreading the word of God to millions of potential converts. During a visit to an evangelistic crusade in Virginia, he told 10,000 cheering people: "I would rather be a private in the Army of Jesus Christ than a General in the U.S. Army." Not that he feels he must choose one or the other. The General describes Washington, D.C., as "the center of God's power," and he has

written, "Our nation and our allies need whatever we can do to put God's unerring hand upon the helm of the free world. Praise the Lord."

## coke (and 7-up) on troubled water

Ralph Nader says that Coca-Cola and other soft drinks may yet replace the only liquid now consumed in greater volume—drinking water. At any rate, the soft drink industry is trying to achieve that milestone.

Back in 1966, it seems, Coke, 7-Up, and Pepsi overtook milk, as soft drinks became the number two liquid consumed in America. According to Nader, the journal of the soft drink industry is advising manufacturers that water "must now be considered vulnerable because of the widely publicized pollution problem."

Nader has also called on the Coca-Cola company to make its product more nutritious. It currently controls 42 percent of the soft drink industry and is not required to list ingredients on the bottle.