



Exploding The Phone

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KHJ - TV
CHANNEL 9
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12:00 Noon

TREESA DRURY: Sometime ago there was information given out which we call strictly a rumor, it has been called a rumor by the telephone company. That was that somewhere, somehow, Paul Newman had tried to get back a refund on a credit card he had which would allow him to make long distance calls anywhere in the United States. He gave out the credit card number and because of that \$400,000 worth of fraudulent telephone calls have been billed to the telephone company. We'll get a little bit more on that story now by talking to Mr. Arthur Dunn of Pacific Telephone.

Hello Sir! Do you know at all how this rumor first got started about Paul Newman's credit card?

ARTHUR DUNN: No I really don't. It started apparently somewhere around Philadelphia and then it was given alot of credence when it was published in the Ramparts Magazine.

TREESA DRURY: If someone just has a phony number or lets say, they stand next to somebody in a booth and pick up the credit card number, as that person gives it, can they then just go to a phone and charge anything to that number?

ARTHUR DUNN: Yes that is possible. If they overheard your number for example, they could go to another phone and make use of it. However, this is where our investigative teams enter in. They would upon being advised by you that someone has placed a charge on your bill that you were not supposed to pay, get our Bureau working on it and ascertain that the call was made by some other person and in many cases the called party remembers who it was that called them.

TREESA DRURY: I see, then they could find out that way. Then it would not be billed to the person who had the credit card, you would try to bill it to the person who actually made the call if you could track him down?

ARTHUR DUNN: Well, you see, we would have no way of knowing at that point that the call was fraudulently placed. It would appear on your bill and then you would probably do as I do and check over my bill on my charge accounts at the department stores to be sure that I purchased whatever is on the bill. Then from that point on you would have to notify the department store or the phone company that you did not in fact, place that call or buy that merchandise.

TREESA DRURY: What about this \$400,000 they were talking about in the recent TIMES article that has been charged up on this fictitious number? Is the phone company going to be able to get any of that back?

ARTHUR DUNN: Yes. I don't know specifically about the charges in that case, but generally we have a pretty good results in collecting money. Of course our purpose is to collect the money and its only in very extreme cases that we would prosecute the individual. So, I would say generally we collect a very substantial percentage of this money.

TREESA DRURY: So, its certainly something people shouldn't try to get away with because they just aren't going to get away with it. And also, something consumers should remember to check their phone bills when they come in to make sure it hasn't happened. Another quick questions. I also heard that during Christmas somebody said out of the country that IBM is going to pick up the tab for any phone calls that were made by Viet Nam servicemen, and that there was a tremendous amount of phone calls made and charged to IBM. Do you know anything about that at all?

ARTHUR DUNN: No. Just what I read in the TIMES article, and apparently IBM for a number of years has given a list of certain of their employees who are on military duty overseas to the, in this case, to the Deutsche Post in Germany. They've allowed them one 5-minute call and from what I gather from the article this was abused.

TREESA DRURY: Some people talked as long as an hour.

ARTHUR DUNN: That is correct. And all these rumors spread like wildfire and having been in the military myself, I know how they do spread. It just travels like a flash fire and everybody hears about it and in some cases takes advantage of it.

TREESA DRURY: So the Telephone Company has its investigative work cut out for them there too then?

ARTHUR DUNN: Yes.

TREESA DRURY: Thank you very much.