The Secrets Of The Little Blue Box (Singles Classic)

Synopsis

There is an underground telephone network in this country. Al Gilbertson, creator of the â œblue box,â • discovered it the very day news of his own arrest hit the papers. That evening his phone began ringing. Phone phreaks from Seattle, from Florida, from New York, from San Jose, and from Los Angeles began calling him and telling him about the phone-phreak network. Heâ ™d get a call from a phone phreak whoâ ™d say nothing but, â œHang up and call this number.â •Often cited as one of the greatest magazine stories ever written, Ron Rosenbaumâ ™s singular, Pynchon-esque The Secrets of the Little Blue Box, about an underground group of hackers who built devices that could crack the telephone companiesâ ™ networks, has staked its claim in the annals of history as the story that inspired the partnership of Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak and helped create hacker culture.Features an afterword by the author.The Secrets of the Little Blue Box was originally published in Esquire, October 1971.Cover design by Adil Dara.

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Customer Reviews

For those of us old enough to recall the days of rotary dial phones, and the introduction of the touch tone phone, this story will have particular significance. It relates how a few clever young men (they

were all male, at least those mentioned in this story) first discovered how they could simulate the sounds used by the telephone companies switching circuitry in order to make long distance calls without charge, and how they became even more sophisticated in learning how to make calls anywhere in the world, route calls at will, and accomplish many other things. As the phone companies become aware of their activities, they naturally worked to identify them and stop them, and the cat and mouse game continued at increasing levels of complexity - to this very day.And since the phone companies were among the first users of mainframe computers, this naturally led the hackers (they called themselves 'phone phreaks' and other terms) to dig into the computers that were connected to the phone lines, both to manage the telephone network and in their early use as dial-in computers for shared use. Our modern day computer hackers are the descendants of those early 'pioneers', if you will, both in spirit and in technical know-how.Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak have both spoken about their own early involvement in these activities, and how they earned money from selling their own versions of the 'little blue boxes' referred to in the title of this story, before moving on and developing the Apple computers.The 'Kindle Single' here is a reprint of the story that appeared in the October, 1971 issue of Esquire magazine. It is readily available on the internet, simply type the title of this book into Google and you'll find numerous places where it has been reprinted (with permission).

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