

# Jack Anderson's Washington Merry-go-round

—With Les Whitten

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WASHINGTON — Some of our most sensitive national secrets could be tapped by a few bright computer experts with access to a telephone.

A startling government report, which has been declassified but not released to the public, tells how a group of Navy scientists cracked a Univac 1108 computer system using an ordinary telephone. Yet the system was supposed to be "secure."

The 1108 is in widespread use throughout the government. The White House, all the military services and several federal agencies use this system to store sensitive information. Not only top defense secrets but personal details the government gathers about private individuals are contained in 1108 computers.

The Navy scientists write that they inserted "trap doors" in the system. "At the user's expense, we were able to covertly copy their files. Had we wanted to, we could have destroyed or selectively rewritten them."

What an enemy could do with this access to highly classified information is alarming. It also has grave privacy implications since the files on private citizens would also be compromised.

The scientists who engineered this computer break-in wrote that they

believe "penetration of large (operating systems) can be performed at very low cost. However, because there are few well-documented examples of such penetration, there is a false sense of security among system managers, many of whom believe that holes in their systems exist in theory but are, in practice, not possible to exploit."

The government now claims to have plugged the holes described in this report. But the scientists claim "that no individual can understand such large and haphazardly constructed systems and the systems are bound to have holes."

The General Accounting Office (GAO), in a private study, found that some government employees have already turned their knowledge of these "holes" to their own profit. The GAO investigated 60 cases of criminal computer fraud, which cost the government more than \$2 million in losses.

A clerk discovered, for example, that she could introduce fictitious food stamp claims into a computer on behalf of accomplices. They collected more than \$90,000 in fraudulent benefits before they were caught as a result of an anonymous tip.

Footnote: Rep. John Moss, D-Calif.,

who has learned about the computer spying, has alerted both the House and Senate Armed Services committees, urging an investigation.

WHALE HUNT: For centuries, the Arctic sea mammals, particularly the whale, have provided the Eskimos with most of the food, clothing and shelter they needed to survive in the most hostile environment on earth.

We sent our reporter, Hal Berriton, to the northernmost town on the continent, Barrow, Alaska, near the tip of a tiny peninsula jutting into the ice-bound Arctic Ocean to spend a week with the Eskimos. His assignment was to report the effect of the Alaskan oil fever upon the Eskimo culture.

The highlight of Berriton's stay with the Eskimos was a whale hunt. The Eskimos told how white intruders were scaring off the great whales, whose blubber is still one of their staple foods. One hunting party had waited on the ice nearly a week for a whale to appear in the open water, they said, only to see it frightened away by a low-flying plane.

Nevertheless, the Eskimos took Berriton with them on a whale hunt. He trotted alongside a sealskin boat which was lashed to a wooden sled. His job was to help keep the sled on the narrow trail that twisted through the Arctic ice pack.

They raced over the ice as Eskimos have been doing for hundreds of years. Yet there was evidence of the encroachment of the white civilization. The sled was pulled not by a team of Husky dogs but by a Stiddo snowmobile. The Eskimos also tired sooner than

their forebears would have and stopped for Coke breaks. "Last time I felt as bad as this," one Eskimo companion panted, "I'd been on a drunk for a week." He added, "Yet I've been smoking since I was nine."

After refreshing themselves with Coke and orange pop, the Eskimos tossed the empty cans out on the ice. They also listened to Johnny Cash music on a transistor radio.

As they approached the edge of the ice, a party of returning hunters warned that the ice by the open water was treacherous. So Berriton and his friends pitched their tents a safe distance from the open water. The canvas tents, introduced by 18th-century whaling ships which sailed out of San Francisco, were lined with wooden racks and then were filled with caribou skins.

Inside the tent, a Coleman stove was lit and they dined on Spam, bread and hot tea. They slept until 3:00 a.m. when a companion shook Berriton awake.

"We have to go quickly," the Eskimo said urgently. "The radio says there is going to be a 40-mile-an-hour wind pretty soon." This could have broken up the ice and left them stranded on a floating iceberg.

The approaching storm ended the whale hunt before it got started. By dawn's eerie Arctic light, they headed back to Barrow, the roar of their snowmobile shattering the frozen stillness.

Footnote: We'll have more reports from Berriton on life with the Eskimos in future columns.