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Contrary Rulings on Wiretaps

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ST. LOUIS — (AP) — The 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has upheld the legality of wiretapping in affirming the convictions of four men charged with possessing and transporting illegally imported heroin.

The action came four days after U.S. District Court Judge Joseph S. Lord III of Philadelphia ruled in another case that the 1968 federal wiretap law was "unconstitutional on its face."

Judge Lord said it violated the 4th Amendment's protection from unreasonable search.

The ruling by the appeals court came Monday and was disclosed publicly yesterday.

The three-judge appeals court noted the U.S. Supreme Court has held some forms of wiretapping are constitutional when accompanied by appropriate safeguards.

The appeals court said those safeguards had been assured in the case of Eddie D. Cox, Carl E. Branch, Edward C. Miller, and James P. Dearborn, all of Kansas City. Their prison sentences ranged from 12 to 25 years.

The four men were among 17 persons indicted in a alleged narcotics ring after a federal judge permitted wire-tapping over a 20-day period.