

Friday, December 28, 1973
Richard C. Hottelet - sub.

WATERGATE

Two of the convicted Watergate burglars are being released from prison at least temporarily - by court order. E. Howard Hunt and Bernard L. Barker will be set free on their own recognizance next Wednesday or Thursday, while the U.S. Court of Appeals considers their earlier conviction.

Hunt pleaded guilty last January and was formally sentenced last month to serve between two-and-a-half and eight years in prison. Barker was sentenced to eighteen months to six years on his plea of guilty. Three of the men arrested with them are in prison, but come up for parole on January 7th. James McCord, accused of leading the team, has been free pending appeal of his conviction, while G. Gordon Liddy, described as the mastermind of the burglary, is now serving a six to twenty years prison term.

ENERGY

The Prince of Venezulean oil was almost doubled today - now making it fourteen-dollars-and-eight-cents a barrel - and this probably means price increases for car and home owners on the U.S. East Coast. Venezuela has boosted its oil prices by more than four-hundred percent during the past year.

Federal Energy Chief William Simon - who yesterday announced a stand-by plan for gasoline rationing - agreed today that auto drivers will face what he calls " a moderate form of rationing" in January because service station supplies will be cut by about twenty percent. Reason for the short supply will be government fuel allocations - due to become fully effective in Mid-January.

GASOLINE

The shortage of gasoline is being felt acutely as the nation embarks on the New Year holiday weekend. Today Attorney General Robert Bork ordered the ninety-four U. S. Attorneys around the country under his jurisdiction to get court orders restraining gasoline dealers found to be gouging the public.

WATERGATE

The Western White House says President Nixon is "re-evaluating" his previous decision to release the Watergate tapes because he believes there could be ambiguity in their interpretation if they are made public. In making the announcement, Deputy Press Secretary Gerald Warren indicated that the tapes would NOT be released - despite the President's promise to Republican leaders. Warren adding that release of the tapes to Senate investigators would lead to a "distortion" of the facts - as he put it. He made the statement when asked to comment on a story in today's Washington Post which says the President has decided to resist all attempts to subpoena or publish transcripts of his tapes and documents because - says the Post - his advisers fear any new disclosures would indicate he knew about the Watergate cover-up.

ECONOMY

General Motors says, early next year, it plans to lay-off eighty-six-thousand employes across the nation because of the energy crisis and slumping car sales. Also, it will close down ten plants for up to ten days during January and February. Despite this, ~~and~~ two airlines - American and Trans-World - say they plan to furlough more than five-thousand employes because of the fuel shortage - despite government plans for a ten percent increase in jet fuel allocations.

Communities with a high rate of unemployment are expected to benefit from a new Federal job-training program which President Nixon signed into law today. The legislation sets up a program of nearly two-Billion dollars to be administered by state and local governments.

MISSILES

The U.S. Air Force wants Congress to approve a plan whereby eight Minuteman missiles will be launched on test flights over perhaps five western states - with the flights terminating in the Pacific Ocean. The missiles would NOT carry nuclear warheads - ^{THE AIR FORCE SAYS} but debris would fall ^{IN UNOCCUPIED TERRITORY} along the way, particularly in Idaho. Other states beneath the flights would be Montana and Oregon - and possibly California and Washington State - after the missiles are launched from an air base near Great Falls, Montana.

COMET

The comet - Kohoutek - completed its ^(TRIP AROUND) ~~encirclement~~
the sun today - then sped back into deep space with the
three Skylab astronauts charting its path. The comet could
NOT be seen from earth, because of the sun's brightness -
but at least one solar scientist predicts that won't ^{be} ~~the~~ case
during the first or second week of January. Doctor Ernest
Hildner of the Boulder, Colorado, observatory, says Kohoutek
should get brighter and the tail larger - making it a more
visible object in the western sky.

NOVELIST

In a book smuggled out of Russia and published today in France, Soviet novelist Alexander Solzhenitsyn accuses the Russian secret police of crimes against the people - and calls for their punishment. The new book - entitled "The Gulag Archipelago" - is part of Solzhenitsyn's autobiography and in it, for the first time, he uses the real names of persons. The book details Soviet prison horrors, including torture by the secret police - now known as the Committee for State Security - or the K-G-B. It deals with the first forty years of Soviet rule, beginning in Nineteen-Eighteen.

TAPE

**Lowell Thomas is on the move again - this time to
Hawaii - and he gives us this report on a cartoonist of
renown. Lowell.....**

TAPE RUNS: 1:47

OUTCUE: So long....

Thank you Lowell -
~~another story in~~
a moment.

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RUBE

One of the two or three American humorists recognized as a genius right around the globe - the late, great Rube Goldberg; cartoonist - sculptor - author - radio and TV personality; and now the subject of a biography - "Rube Goldberg, His Life and His Work" by Peter C. Marzio.

The greatest of all Rube's creations - were, of course, his weirdly wonderful inventions. This book is just full of them. For example, a novel way of conducting elections: "First, look at board - A - and recognize picture of your candidate on wall. Turn clock - B - to corresponding number and press electric button - C. This causes cuckoo - D - to duck head with exact force to make mallet - E - bit padde - F - and toss ball - G - through hole in candidate's hat. Ball hits clerk - H - who awakens and marks down the vote for candidate to whom he has been assigned." Rube adding: "When all clerks are unconscious - election is over."

Another of Rube's talents - was a gift for prophecy. In one of his last cartoons, at age eighty-seven - he foresaw in the year Two Thousand and Seventy: A politician saying - "I'll reduce taxes and get rid of the crooks;" a woman in curlers - campaigning for equal rights; a mad scientist saying - "I think I'm getting the answer to pollution;" and a father and his hippie son - embroiled in a generation gap.

Author Marzio stating it all when he said: "There'll never be another Rube Goldberg."

POSTAL

The U. S. Postal Service says it is putting off the postal rate increases scheduled to go into effect a week from tomorrow. Acting at the request of the Cost of Living Council, it will wait until March second, before raising the cost of a first class letter from eight cents to ten.

This is Richard C. Hottel. As Lowell Thomas would say - so long until Monday.