

World and Nation

Air breakout forces prison to tighten security

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Embarrassed officials tightened security at a suburban prison Thursday, a day after an escaped convict in a stolen helicopter airlifted his inmate sweetheart to freedom.

The daring escape occurred at the 80-acre Federal Correctional Institution in Pleasanton, called "Club Fed" because of its country-club setting about 30 miles southeast of San Francisco.

FBI agents, federal marshals and police were searching for escapees Ronald J. McIntosh and Samantha Dorinda Lopez.

It was the first aerial escape from a federal prison, said Jerry Williford, western regional director of federal prisons.

Authorities say McIntosh, a combat veteran, went to Aris Helicopters in San Jose on Wednesday morning and chartered a Hughes 500D helicopter for \$420 an hour under an assumed name.

Pilot Peter Szabo said he was forced at gunpoint to land in a rural area near Danville, about 10 miles from the prison. The pilot said McIntosh ordered him to hand over his shoes, checked his watch and then took off.

The helicopter landed in a recreation yard as surprised prisoners and staff members looked on. Lopez dashed across the courtyard and boarded the craft.

Warden Rob Roberts said one armed guard was in the exercise yard when the helicopter landed but no shots were fired.

McIntosh and Lopez had worked together in the prison business office and had been seen walking together and holding hands, Roberts said.

Deputy U.S. Marshal Dick Bipus said, "They were boyfriend and girlfriend in prison. It sounds like something out of a TV series."

Walker gets life sentence; judge discourages parole

BALTIMORE (AP) — Former Navy radioman John A. Walker Jr., admitted head of a family spy ring, was sentenced to life imprisonment Thursday and his son Michael was given a 25-year term by a judge who urged they be denied parole.

"Your task was to defend your country. You chose to betray it," U.S. District Judge Alexander Harvey II told the elder Walker, 49, who received nearly \$1 million from the Soviet Union for his spying.

The judge, a World War II veteran, expressed personal revulsion that two enlisted servicemen could turn against their country, and added, "In my opinion, your espionage activities have caused tremendous harm to the national security of this country."

Evidence showed Walker used his high-level Navy security clearance to obtain classified information about Navy communications, ship locations and routes, weapons and sensor data and Navy tactics, and deliver it to the Soviets, pulling family members into the arrangement. His brother Arthur, 52, is serving a life term for espionage.

In the pre-sentence report, prosecutors wrote that "if it were possible to rate the harm to the nation caused by particular acts of espionage, then the injury caused by the Walker espionage ring must be of the first rank."

The judge followed pre-sentencing recommendations of U.S. Attorney Breckinridge L. Willcox and the plea bargain agreement reached with the Walkers in October 1985, in which the elder Walker agreed to testify against former Navy radioman Jerry Whitworth and reveal details of his spy activities.

But Harvey recommended that no parole be granted to either man.

"You do not seem to appreciate the enormity of these crimes. In my opinion you have shown . . . no remorse," he told John Walker. "I should do everything in my power to see this (parole) does not occur."

Walker's attorney Fred Warren Bennett immediately objected to the judge's parole recommendation, calling it inconsistent with the substance of the plea agreements.

The recommendation is non-binding on a parole board.

"There is at least something that can be said on your behalf," he told Michael Walker, 24, who blinked frequently and stood with hands folded as the sentence was pronounced. "As an immature 21-year-old you were easily led. It was your father who profited from using you as he did . . . and you received little."

Charles G. Bernstein, Michael Walker's attorney, said he would review the plea bargain before responding to the parole recommendation.

Robert Hunter, the FBI agent who spent hours questioning the elder Walker, said he believed Walker had provided at least 98 percent of the espionage-ring story.

The judge and prosecutors admitted there were questions as to whether John Walker's two escape attempts violated the cooperation called for in the plea bargain and questioned whether he had told the truth on polygraph tests. But, they conceded that Walker's testimony helped convict Whitworth, who drew a 365-year sentence.

GM will close 11 plants in 3 years

DETROIT (AP) — General Motors Corp. will close 11 plants employing more than 29,000 workers over the next three years to reduce overcapacity and cut losses, the company said Thursday.

Closing the three stamping, one body and seven final assembly plants in Michigan, Illinois, Ohio and Missouri will reduce GM's fixed costs by \$500 million a year, Chairman Roger Smith said in a long-awaited announcement.

GM and United Auto Workers officials had no estimate of how many workers will lose their jobs, saying it will be months before they know how many workers will be able to transfer to other plants and how many will be retrained for new jobs at GM.

"There's too many unknowns here," said Frank Joyce, a UAW spokesman in Detroit.

The closings were part of the first phase of a reorganization at GM. GM President James McDonald said other plants are being studied.

"These actions are absolutely necessary to maintain our marketplace leadership and enhance the job security of the greater bulk of our workforce," he said.

GM suffered third-quarter operating losses of about \$338 million.

"It's a very constructive move on GM's part," said industry analyst Gary Glaser of First Boston Corp. in New York. "I think as we go forward there will be further closings."

Assembly lines at the affected

plants were shut down Thursday morning so the closings could be explained to workers, most of whom were disappointed but not surprised.

"We naturally regret this decision," UAW Vice President Donald Ephlin said. "We will make absolutely sure that all of our people at every location receive all of the assistance and every negotiated benefit they are entitled to."

Most workers will be eligible for some benefits, which range from training for new jobs to guaranteed income payments for those with over 10 years' seniority.

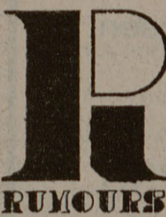
About 3,000 of those affected by the closings are salaried employees, McDonald said.

RUMOUR:

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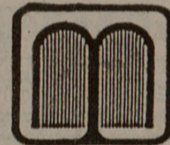
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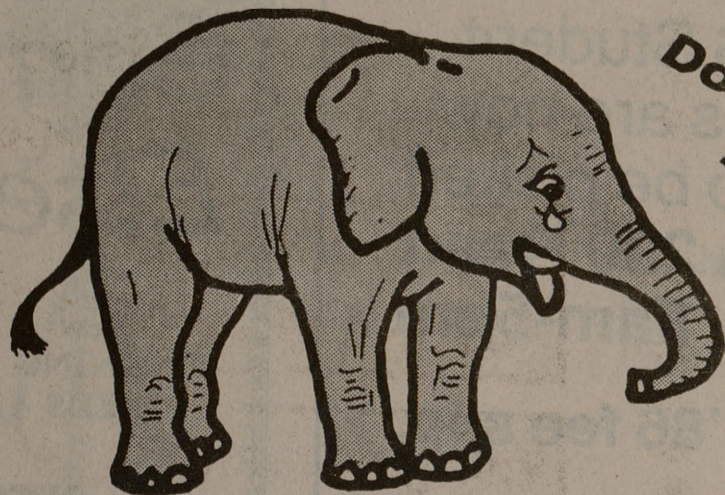
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