

Coast Gift Show Focuses On Watergate Novelties

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There may be a Watergate bug in your Christmas stocking this year.

Wholesale buyers at the San Francisco gift show placing orders for Christmas showed great interest in merchandise inspired by the Watergate scandal, according to United Press International.

One popular item is the Watergate bug, a doll outfitted with earphones and a large head that bounces on a spring. It comes in two sizes, wholesaling for \$1.50 and \$3.

Al Baum, a Los Angeles novelty dealer, featured posters of President Nixon hiding behind a towel reading "Watergate Hotel."

Countdown Calendar

Other booths at the San Francisco show feature a Nixon countdown calendar, listing the days until the President leaves office, and an aerosol can said to repel "exaggerated claims, tall stories and political discussions."

The Lerner Home Newspapers in Chicago report that more than 4,500 "Watergate bracelets" of nickel and silver have been sold, at \$3.95 each, since they went on sale some months ago. There are four models, with the name of either John W. Dean 3d, John D. Ehrlichman, H. R. Haldeman or John N. Mitchell. The Mitchell bracelet bears the date 5-10-73, the date of his indictment. The others have the date 4-30-73, when the three White House aides resigned.

The bracelets were the idea of Louis Lerner, publisher of the papers, and two Chicago friends.

The E. J. Aleo Company of Melrose, Mass., says it sold about 150 silver medallions of

President Nixon in "see no evil, hear no evil" poses on the first day of mail order sales. They sell for \$45 each.

A T-shirt concern in Los Angeles planned to market a shirt reproducing a cartoon by a Los Angeles Times cartoonist, Paul Conrad. It shows Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., chairman of the Watergate committee, pointing a finger, with the caption reading: "President Nixon, Uncle Sam Ervin wants you."

The Watergate apartment complex in Washington, where the scandal broke open when the Democratic headquarters were bugged, is cashing in on the publicity. It has a spotted bug on its stationery and advertising. A jewelry shop in

the shopping arcade sells a gold-plated pin of a dancing elephant wearing jeweled earphones. The price: \$25.

A Novelty Bug

A novelty shop in Watergate has its own version of the Watergate bug. Wire legs and antennae are soldered to the discarded ends from film canisters thrown away by photographers at the Senate hearings. The item goes for \$10.

Washington street vendors are selling "Impeach Nixon" buttons. At least three Watergate games, a Watergate jigsaw puzzle and two humor books based on the scandal are available in Washington. A Watergate game poster says players

may cheat, if they can get away with it.

Not all stores are going along with the fad sales. Fred O. Meyer, owner of the Fred Meyer Shopping Center in Portland, Ore., had Watergate T-shirts removed from the sales floor. They bore President Nixon's caricature and such slogans as "Don't bug me" and "Let me make this perfectly clear."

In Buffalo, Frank Tatar, president of Comon-Tat Inc., a manufacturer of novelties, said "I wouldn't touch Watergate with a 10-foot pole."

"A guy would have to be pretty silly to try and make money on Watergate," Mr. Tatar said. "He's got to have a warped sense of humor."