

# The Atlantic

## A Prison Escape From 'Little Siberia'

The convicted murderers who broke out of one of New York's toughest prisons may have had help from staff on the inside.



A note with a caption "Have a nice day" left on an opening in a pipe by two inmates who escaped Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora, New York.

New York Governor's Office / Reuters

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The daring prison break in Dannemora, New York, that launched a thousand *Shawshank Redemption* references (and even **one side-by-side comparison**) still remains unsolved.

Convicted murderers Richard Matt and David Sweat, who were said to have **used power tools to dig their escape route**, are still at large. A \$100,000 reward **has been posted** as a search continues both in the United States and Canada, just 40 miles north of the Clinton Correctional Facility, the maximum-security prison where the men were serving time.

The escape is as baffling as it is unprecedented. The two **were reported missing from their cells** during a 5:30 a.m. bed check on Saturday morning. The men had been replaced by dummies made of sweatshirts in their beds. As *The Washington Post* **relayed**, "it was the first time that anyone had escaped from the maximum-security portion of the institution, which has been open since 1865 and is known as 'Little Siberia' because of its isolated location and the region's harsh winters." Following the weekend, with a massive manhunt already underway, one official warned that the two men **"could literally be anywhere."**

In a Monday press conference, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo **told reporters** that he believes the two men **may have had help** from the staff on the inside. "I'd be shocked if a correction guard was involved in this, but they definitely had help," he told NBC's *Today*. "Otherwise, they couldn't have done this on their own."

Martin Horn, the former commissioner of the New York City Department of Correction, gave support to the idea of some broader conspiracy, telling the Canadian Press that the prison **keeps a strict inventory** of "every pair of scissors, every wrench, every power tool." The prison also **boasts some 1,400 guards** for an inmate population of just under 3,000.

On Monday, the *New York Post* reported that a female prison worker **had been interrogated** and was thought to be a possible accomplice in the escape. The woman was not thought to be a guard and has since been removed from her post. Meanwhile, the bloodhounds are still out.