


Celebrate New England sports with The Globies Presented by Mercedes-Benz. Help us pick the winners - click here to vote now.

TEXT SIZE | MANAGE ACCOUNT | LOG OUT

The Boston Globe

NEWS	▶	METRO	▶
LOTTERY	▶	OBITUARIES	▶
GLOBE NORTH	▶	GLOBE SOUTH	▶
GLOBE WEST	▶	DATA DESK	▶
MAGAZINE	▶	TODAY'S PAPER	▶

E-MAIL FACEBOOK TWITTER  LINKEDIN

5



Officials said David Sweat (left), 34, and Richard Matt, 48, cut through steel walls at the back of their adjacent cells and steel pipes while making their "Shawshank Redemption"-style breakout.

N.Y. STATE POLICE VIA GETTY IMAGES

By **Matt Rocheleau**

GLOBE STAFF JUNE 11, 2015

As the search continues for pair of convicted killers who escaped more than two weeks ago from an upstate New York prison, the fugitives have set themselves apart from other inmates not only by successfully breaking free, but also avoiding capture for this long.

No New York prisoner has been at large for more than three days since 2002.

While locked up convicts still go rogue occasionally — federal data estimates some 2,000 lawbreakers freed themselves from criminal confinement in 2013 — there was once a time when escapes were far more common.

In 1978, 7,650 inmates escaped prison and more than 14,000 did so in 1994, according to the United States Bureau of Justice Statistics. Since then though, escapes have declined dramatically. About 2,000 were reported in 2013 and overall roughly one of every 100,000 inmates have escaped annually over the past 10 years.

The decline in escapes, and the increase in prisoner deaths has meant that today inmates in America are more likely to die in prison than they are to escape.

Prison escapes vs. deaths in prison in the US

Jailbreaks have declined over the past two decades, while deaths have trended upward since 1978.

— ESCAPES — DEATHS

Created with Highcharts

4.0.3197819791980198119821983198419851986198719881989199019911992199319941995199619971998199920002001
17.5k

DATA: U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics

MATT ROCHELEAU/GLOBE STAFF



Items found in cabin may

be linked to escaped N.Y. convicts

Authorities recovered “specific items” from a cabin some 20 miles west of the Dannemora prison and sent them to labs for testing.

N.Y. prison employee may have been part of plot

Experts have attributed the shrinking escape numbers to new security technology and prison construction methods that make the facilities tougher to break out of, as well as better oversight by the people in charge of prisons and inmates.

With a massive manhunt underway in areas of upstate New York, Vermont, and Pennsylvania, the longer the New York fugitives evade capture the more unusual their case becomes.

Statistics suggest that fugitives from prison rarely remain free for long.

According to data reported by New York’s corrections department, escaped inmates are rarely on the run for more than a day before they are caught, and in most cases their freedom lasts less than six hours.

In 18 of the 30 escapes from New York prisons between 2002 and 2013 the fleeing inmates were caught within six hours, and all but one was caught within a day; that inmate was apprehended within three days.

As of Monday morning, the runaway New York inmates had been loose for 17 days.

States with the highest rates of escapes in 2013 were Alabama and Iowa, with 14 and 8 per 100,000 inmates, respectively.

Massachusetts jailbreaks have been much less common. Here, in 2013, three inmates escaped. A report by the state corrections department says all three were apprehended and returned to custody.

Data around prison escapes remains imperfect, however.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics notes that its national figures only account for inmates who were sentenced to more than a year in prison, some of the figures are based on estimates, and that not all states keep as thorough records not do all states count escapes in the same way.

Additionally, some of the federal data include prisoners who were marked as missing, even though they did not escape or even attempt to, including cases in which a prisoner had received authorization for a temporary release — something allowed on a case-by-case basis and for a special purpose such as attending a family member’s funeral.

Matt Rocheleau can be reached at matthew.rocheleau@globe.com. Follow him on Twitter [@mrochele](#)



Get **Today's Headlines** from the Globe in your inbox:

[Privacy Policy](#)

SHOW 5 COMMENTS



Top 10 Trending Articles

Most Viewed	Most Commented	Most Shared
An Auburn child lost amidst chaos and addiction		
When did parents get so scared?		
Donald Trump was brash, even at Wharton business school		
Nick Cafardo Sunday Baseball Notes: As Red Sox GM search continues, diversity is emphasized		
Sexism in science leads to willful blindness		
Four-year-old boy drowns at Dennis beach, half-hour after lifeguard shifts end		
<p>Subscribe Dan Shaughnessy Tom Werner breaks his silence on Don Orsillo DIGITAL HOME DELIVERY</p>		

[Stephen Colbert's highly visible transition to 'The Late Show'](#)
 MY ACCOUNT

LOG IN
[Nick Cafardo](#) | [On Baseball: Red Sox not wasting time trying to get outfield lined up for 2016](#)
 MANAGE MY ACCOUNT

DOWNLOAD CUSTOMER SERVICE APP
[Coffee or wine: which is better for you?](#)

- SOCIAL**
- FACEBOOK
 - TWITTER
 - GOOGLE+

- CONTACT**
- HELP
 - FAQS
 - GLOBE NEWSROOM
 - ADVERTISE
- MORE**
- NEWS IN EDUCATION
 - ARCHIVES
 - PRIVACY POLICY
 - TERMS OF SERVICE
 - TERMS OF PURCHASE
 - YOUR AD CHOICES
 - WORK AT BOSTON GLOBE MEDIA