

Details Emerge on How Prisoner Escaped Moscow Jail

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Oleg Topalov

A convicted murderer who fled from the infamous Matrosskaya Tishina detention center this week used a spoon, a blanket and a rope for his escape, investigators said Wednesday.

Oleg Topalov, 32, who had been found guilty of murder and illegal possession of firearms, escaped from his cell through a hole in the ceiling at around 5 a.m. Tuesday.

"It was established that Oleg Topalov used a spoon to scrape away the cement and brickwork from the wall of the ventilation shaft in his cell," an unidentified investigator told Interfax.

Topalov then climbed through the gap and onto the roof of the cell block. He managed to get onto the roof of a neighboring block before lowering himself into the grounds of Gilyarovskogo psychiatric hospital with a blanket and some rope. After that he fled in an unknown direction.

Moscow police have been mobilized for an all-out search for the fugitive and an internal investigation of the incident has been opened.

It was the first escape from a detention center in Moscow in 12 years.

The police have a good record at recapturing escapees. Reputed hit man Alexander Solonik, the only man ever to escape from Matrosskaya Tishina and remain at large, managed to flee to Greece after the jailbreak in 1995. But his body was found on Feb. 2, 1997, about 20 kilometers north of Athens. He had been strangled and wrapped in plastic bags.

The main building of Matrosskaya Tishina, which means Sailor's Rest, was built in 1918 and over the years has held notable prisoners such as former oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

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