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Moscow Police Capture Escaped Convict

By The Moscow Times

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Police have caught a convicted murderer who made a daring escape with the aid of a spoon from Moscow's Matrosskaya Tishina detention center this week.

Oleg Topalov, 32, was found injured at Izmailovsky Park on Wednesday, and he put up no resistance when two police officers approached, police said. He had suffered a leg injury after jumping from a great height during a day on the run, and as a result made no attempt to flee.

"Both officers who took part in the arrest will receive a reward of 100,000 rubles from Moscow police chief Anatoly Yakunin," the police said in a statement carried by Interfax.

A German shepherd police dog that helped investigators track Topalov in the park in eastern Moscow will be given a bag of premium dry dog food, RIA-Novosti reported.

Topalov, 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. He used a spoon to scrape away the cement and brickwork from the wall of the ventilation shaft in his cell.

Topalev 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.

Moscow police had been mobilized for an all-out search for the fugitive, and an internal investigation of the incident was opened.

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

Police said Topalov was carrying a diary when they caught him, and he had written about his hopes to start a new life.

One entry read: "My dream has been realized. Free will! Freedom! I really want to change my life, and I will do my best to accomplish this."

Topalov was to be returned to Matrosskaya Tishina on Thursday. Police have not specified what consequences he might face for his escape.

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