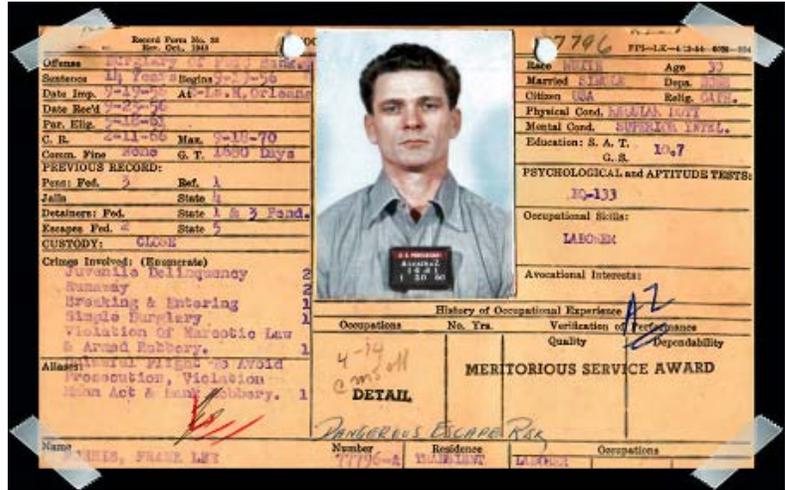


ACTIVITY: Escaping from Alcatraz prison.
CASE: GSAF 1962.06.11
DATE: Monday June 11, 1962
LOCATION: San Francisco Bay, California, USA.

NAME: Frank Lee Morris
DESCRIPTION: If there was ever an inmate who was destined to escape from Alcatraz, it was Frank Lee Morris. In the movie, *Escape from Alcatraz*, starring actor Clint Eastwood, Morris was accurately portrayed as the keen and brilliant mastermind of one of the most famous prison escapes in history. The escape plan took several months to design, and it would necessitate the fabrication of clever decoys and water survival gear.



Frank Lee Morris had spent a lifetime navigating the prison system before his arrival on Alcatraz. From his infant years until his teens Morris was shuffled from one foster home to another, and he was convicted of his first crime at the youthful age of only thirteen. By the time he reached his later teens, Morris's criminal record would include a multitude of crimes ranging from narcotics possession to armed robbery, and he had become a professional inhabitant of the correctional system. He spent his formative years in a boys' training school, and then graduated to a series of ever larger penitentiaries.

Morris was credited by prison officials as possessing superior intelligence, and he earned his ticket to Alcatraz by building an impressive resume of escapes. In 1960, Federal officials decided that his pattern of escape attempts, termed as "shotgun freedom" (although his escapes had never involved the use of a shotgun), would end at The Rock. On January 20, 1960, Morris disembarked from the prison launch and became inmate #AZ-1441.

Frank's accomplices in the "Great Escape" were equally well acquainted with the dark world of organized crime. Brothers John and Clarence Anglin were also serving sentences at Alcatraz for bank robbery, having been convicted along with their brother Alfred. All three had been incarcerated at the Federal Penitentiary in Atlanta when they first became acquainted with Morris, and John and Clarence were eventually sent to Alcatraz following a sequence of attempted escapes.

Alcatraz inmate Allen West, who occupied an adjacent cell, was also brought in on the scheme. He was serving his second term on The Rock and carried a reputation as an arrogant criminal, and he knew John Anglin from the State Penitentiary in Florida. The escape plan started to take shape in December of 1961, beginning with a collection of

several old saw blades that West allegedly found in one of the utility corridors while cleaning. In later interviews, West would take credit for masterminding the clever escape. The plan was extremely complex and involved the design and fabrication of ingenious lifelike dummies, water rafts, and life preservers, fashioned from over fifty rain coats that had been acquired from other inmates - some donated and some stolen. They would also require a variety of crudely made tools to dig with, and to construct the accessories necessary for the escape. By May of 1962, Morris and the Anglins had already dug through the cell's six-by-nine-inch vent holes, and had started work on the vent on top of the cellblock.

The Anglins inhabited adjacent cells, as did West and Morris, who also resided nearby. The inmates alternated shifts, with one working and one on lookout. They would start work at 5:30 p.m. and continue till about 9:00 p.m., just prior to the lights-out count. Meanwhile John and Clarence started fabricating the dummy heads, and even gave them the pet names of "Oink" and "Oscar." The heads were crude but lifelike, and were constructed from a homemade cement-powder mixture that included such innocuous materials as soap and toilet paper. They were decorated with flesh-tone paint from prison art kits, and human hair from the barbershop.

By late May 1962, Morris, West, and the Anglins had finished cutting through the walls of their cells. The escape was attempted on the night of June 11, 1962 Morris and the Anglins climbed up the ventilation shaft through one of the utility corridors behind the cell and reached the top of the roof. The trio then climbed down the rooftop, pumped up their rubber raft, jumped in and paddled away.

West was the only one of the four conspirators who did not participate in the actual escape, as he was unable to open the ventilator grill in his cell in time. By the time he opened his ventilator grill, the others were gone and had taken the life raft with them. With no means of leaving the island, West had no choice but to remain in his cell until the escape was discovered the next morning.

In the morning, police searched for the escapees on Alcatraz and Angel Island without success. In 1962 the three were put on the FBI's Most Wanted List. Morris and the Anglin brothers subsequently disappeared without a trace and are still wanted by the FBI.

Clarence Anglin claims his grandfather successfully escaped from Alcatraz. Anglin says his ancestor, Clarence Anglin, one of the three men who busted out of Alcatraz Prison on the night of June 11, 1962, survived the icy waters of San Francisco Bay and settled in Iowa, where he died a free man more than a decade later. But he adds, "Two of the guys did die. They were eaten by sharks," said Clarence Anglin. "My grandfather had two toes of his right foot...."

INJURY: Fatal

SOURCES: <http://www.alcatrazhistory.com/alcesc1.htm>; San Jose Mercury News, May 3, 1986; The San Francisco Chronicle, May 3, 1986.

Grandpa Escaped From Alcatraz, Con Claims

Rawlins, Wyoming: Clarence Anglen says federal officials are mistaken if they think that all three men who busted out of Alcatraz Prison on the night of June 11, 1962, died in the treacherously chill waters of San Francisco Bay.

Anglen, a prison inmate in Wyoming, says one of the three was his grandfather, who died a free man in Iowa more than a decade later.

"Two of the guys did die. They were eaten by sharks," said Clarence Anglen. "My grandfather had two toes of his right foot bitten off, but he made it."

If his account is true, it means his grandfather, Clarence Anglin, was the only man ever to escape from the fortresslike island that was a federal prison from 1933 until 1963.

Joseph Bossett, one of the National Park Service employees who gives tours of Alcatraz Island, now part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, said that 31-year-old Clarence Anglin, his brother, John, 32, and Frank Morris, 35, were able to widen an air vent in their cells to gain access to a utility corridor.

The three climbed the plumbing pipes to the roof and climbed through fences to reach the rocky western shore of the island. Using a how-to article in Popular Mechanics magazine, they assembled a raft, using an accordionlike musical instrument to inflate the craft, Bossett said.

"They hopped on that raft and disappeared forever," he said.

Pieces of the raft were recovered some miles away. Bossett said authorities determined the three died by drowning in the tides in the bay or were eaten by sharks.

Clarence Anglen, serving a 10-year sentence for armed robbery at the Wyoming State Penitentiary, said in a copyright interview earlier this week in the Rawlins Daily Times that his grandfather reached Iowa and changed the spelling of the family name.

"I remember when we were kids, grandpa would disappear. When I'd ask why, my parents would tell me that he was off on a drunk. But he was actually in the hills hiding out," the inmate said. "Relatives (in local law enforcement) would tip him beforehand."

Anglen, scheduled to be released this summer, said he did not find out about his grandfather's criminal history until he was released from the Utah State Penitentiary in 1975 and told the older man about serving time.

"I guess it must run in the family," the old man said. Anglen said that's when his grandfather said he had escaped from Alcatraz.

SOURCE: The San Francisco Chronicle, May 3, 1986, page 5

MOON PHASE: First Quarter, June 9, 1962