

June 1962 Alcatraz escape attempt

The **June 1962 Alcatraz escape** was a prison break from Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary, a maximum-security facility located on an island in San Francisco Bay, undertaken by inmates Frank Morris and brothers John and Clarence Anglin. The three men were able to escape from their cells and leave the island in a raft.

The fate of the escapees after they entered San Francisco Bay has remained unknown.^{[2][3][4]} A fourth inmate, Allen West, did not manage to escape his cell in time to join the others and decided to abort his escape attempt. The escape was marked by elaborate planning and execution, including crafting dummy heads to fool the guards, and the manufacture of improvised tools and a raft.

In 1979, the FBI officially closed its investigation, concluding that the men drowned in San Francisco Bay, while trying to reach land.^{[5][6][7]} However, the US Marshals Service has continued to keep the escapees on its wanted list.^{[8][9]} New circumstantial and material evidence has continued to surface, stoking further research and debates on whether the inmates managed to survive.

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Alcatraz, with Angel Island (the fugitives' intended destination) in background, San Francisco Bay, March 1962

Date	June 11, 1962
Time	Approximately 10:30 PM (UTC-7) ^[1]
Location	<u>Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary</u> <u>Alcatraz Island</u> , <u>San Francisco</u> , <u>California</u> , <u>U.S.</u>

Previous attempts

Of the 36 inmates who staged 14 escape attempts over the 29 years that Alcatraz served as a federal penitentiary,^[10] twenty-three were recaptured, six were shot and killed, two drowned, and five (three being Morris and the Anglins and the other two being Theodore Cole and Ralph Roe) are listed as "missing and presumed drowned."^{[11][9]}

Inmates

Frank Morris

Frank Lee Morris (September 1, 1926 – disappeared June 11, 1962) was born in Washington, D.C.^[12] He was left by his mother and father during his childhood, and orphaned at age 11,^[13] and spent most of his formative years in foster homes. He was convicted of his first crime at age 13, and by his late teens had been arrested for crimes ranging from narcotics possession to armed robbery.^{[14][15]} He spent most of his early years in jail serving lunch to prisoners. As he got older, he was arrested for grand larceny in Miami Beach, for stealing cars and armed robbery.^[16] The associate warden's record card at Alcatraz Prison lists his "Crimes Involved" as "Juv. Deliq.-2; Runaways-2; Breaking & Entering-1; Burglary-1; Narcotics & Armed Robbery-1; Unlawful Flight, Mann Act, & Bank Robbery-1."^[15] Morris reportedly ranked in the top 2% of the general population in intelligence, as measured by IQ testing, displaying an IQ of 133.^[17] He served time in Florida and Georgia, then escaped from the Louisiana State Penitentiary while serving 10 years for bank robbery. He was recaptured a year later while committing a burglary and sent to Alcatraz on January 20, 1960 as inmate number AZ1441.^[18]



Frank Morris

John and Clarence Anglin

The Anglin brothers, John William (May 2, 1930 – disappeared June 11, 1962) and Clarence (May 11, 1931 – disappeared June 11, 1962) were born into a family of thirteen children in Donalsonville, Georgia. Their parents, George Robert Anglin and Rachael Van Miller Anglin, were seasonal farm workers; in the early 1940s, they moved the family to Ruskin, Florida, 20 miles south of Tampa, where the truck farms and tomato fields provided a more reliable source of income. Each June they migrated north as far as Michigan to pick cherries. Clarence Anglin was known to have a tattoo of "Zona" on his left wrist and one of "Nita" on his right upper arm.^[19]



John
Anglin

Clarence
Anglin

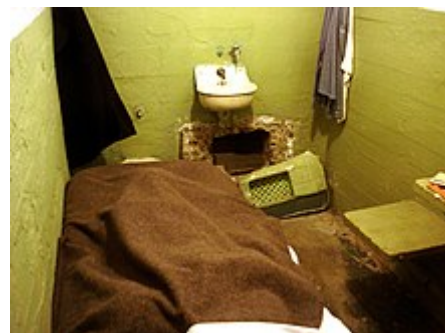
The brothers worked as farmers and laborers. Clarence was first caught breaking into a service station when he was just 14 years old.^[20] They began robbing banks and other establishments as a team in the early 1950s, usually targets that were closed, to ensure that no one got injured. They claimed that they used a weapon only once, during a bank heist – a toy gun.^[21] They were arrested in 1958 after robbing the Bank of Columbia branch in Columbia, Alabama.^{[22][23]} In 1958 John Anglin robbed the Columbia, Alabama, Columbia Savings Bank Building with a toy gun together with his brothers Clarence and Alfred.^[23] Both received 15-to-20-year sentences, which they served at Florida State Prison, Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary, and then Atlanta Penitentiary. After repeated failed attempts to escape from the Atlanta facility, the brothers were transferred to Alcatraz.^[24] John arrived on October 24, 1960, as inmate AZ1476, and Clarence on January 10, 1961, as inmate AZ1485.^[18]

Allen West

Allen West (March 25, 1929 – December 21, 1978)^[25] was born in New York City. He was imprisoned for car theft in 1955, first at Atlanta Penitentiary, then at Florida State Prison. After an unsuccessful escape attempt from the Florida facility, he was transferred to Alcatraz in 1957 and became inmate AZ1335.^[18] When West was transferred to Alcatraz, he was 28 years old and had the education of an eighth-grader. West was arrested over 20 times throughout his lifetime.^[26] In December 1978, suffering severe abdominal pains, West was sent to the Shands Teaching Hospital, where he died of acute peritonitis on December 21 at the age of 49.

Escape

As soon as the four inmates were assigned adjacent cells in December 1961, they began formulating the escape plan together, though always under the leadership of Morris, the chief mastermind and unilateral orchestrator of the plot.^[10] It helped to ensure their mutual trust that they already knew each other from their time in an Atlanta prison years before.^[27] Over the subsequent six months, the men widened the ventilation ducts beneath their sinks using discarded saw blades found on the prison grounds, metal spoons smuggled from the mess hall, and an electric drill improvised from the motor of a vacuum cleaner.^[9] The men concealed the progress of their holes with walls of painted cardboard, and the noise of their work with the louder noise of Morris' accordion on top of the ambient din of music hour.^{[27][10]}



Escapee's prison cell, with widened vent opening beneath the sink.

Once the holes were wide enough to pass through, the escapees nightly accessed the utility corridor left unguarded directly behind their cells' tier and climbed to the vacant top level of the cellblock, where they set up a clandestine workshop unbeknownst to prison staff. Here, with over fifty raincoats among other stolen and donated materials, they constructed life preservers, based on a design one of them chanced to find in *Popular Mechanics*,^[28] as well as a six-by-fourteen-foot rubber raft, the seams carefully stitched by hand and sealed by steam pipes' heat. Having manufactured the raft, they inflated it with a concertina rigged to serve as bellows and furnished the necessary paddles from scrap wood and pilfered screws. Finally, they climbed up a ventilation shaft bound for the roof, and, finding a ponderous fan-grille in the way, removed the rivets holding it in place.^{[27][10]}

The men concealed their absence while working outside their cells—and after the escape itself—by sculpting dummy heads from a home-made papier-mâché-like mixture of soap, toothpaste, concrete dust, and toilet paper, and giving them a realistic appearance with paint from the maintenance shop and hair from the barbershop floor. With towels and clothing piled under the blankets in their bunks and the dummy heads positioned on the pillows, they appeared to be sleeping.^[29]

On the night of June 11, 1962, with all preparations in place, the men began their escape.^[10] However, the cement employed to shore up crumbling concrete around West's vent had hardened, diminishing the hole in size and fixing the grill in place. By the time he managed to remove the grill and re-widen the hole to egress, the others had already left, as he was soon to discover; he busted out to the prison roof only to return to his cell around sunrise and go to sleep.^[30] West went on to cooperate fully with investigators and give them a detailed description of the escape plan, and thus, he was not punished for his role in it.^[27]

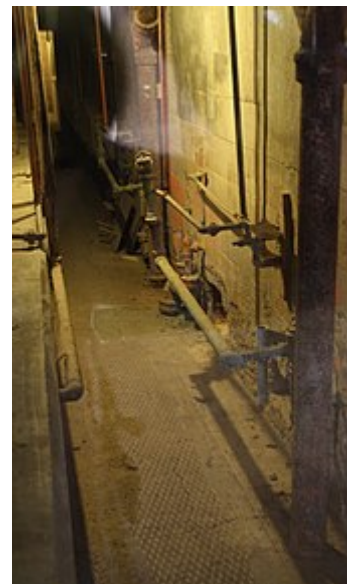


Dummy head found in Morris' cell. The broken nose resulted when the head rolled off the bed and struck the floor after a guard reached through the bars and pushed it.

From the service corridor, Morris and the Anglins climbed the ventilation shaft to the roof. Guards heard a loud crash as they broke out of the shaft, but since nothing further was heard, the source of the noise was not investigated. Hauling their gear with them, they descended 50 feet (15 m) to the ground by sliding down a kitchen vent pipe, then climbed two 12-foot (3.7 m) barbed-wire perimeter fences. At the northeast shoreline, near the power plant—a blind spot in the prison's network of searchlights and gun towers—they inflated their raft with the concertina. At some time after 10 p.m., investigators estimated, they boarded the raft, launched it and departed toward their objective, Angel Island, two miles to the north.^{[27][10]}

Investigation

The escape was not discovered until the morning of June 12, 1962, due to the successful dummy head ruse.^[31] At the time of the escape, Warden Olin G. Blackwell was on vacation in Lake Berryessa in Napa County, California, and he did not believe the men could have survived the waters and made it to shore.^[32] In a joint effort, multiple military and law-enforcement agencies conducted an extensive air, sea, and land search over the next 10 days. On June 14, a Coast Guard cutter picked up a paddle floating about 200 yards (180 m) off the southern shore of Angel Island. On the same day and in the same general location, workers on another boat found a wallet wrapped in plastic complete with names, addresses, and photos of the Anglins' friends and relatives.^[9] On June 21, shreds of raincoat material, believed to be remnants of the raft, were found on a beach not far from the Golden Gate Bridge. The following day, a prison boat picked up a deflated life jacket made from the same material 50 yards (46 m) off of Alcatraz Island. No other physical evidence of the men's fate was ever found.^{[33][27]} According to the final FBI report, the escapees' raft was never recovered.^{[10][27]}



Unguarded utility corridor behind the escapees' cells.



FBI wanted poster of John Anglin.

The FBI officials were, at least publicly, positive the men had drowned.^[34] They cited the fact that "the individuals' personal effects were the only belongings they had, and the men would have drowned before leaving them behind." However, when authorities searched for bodies, none were found. Patrick Mahoney, who ran the launch that traveled between Alcatraz and the mainland, had some doubts that the men perished, saying "I felt that they didn't make it, but I thought we'd find a body. We didn't find a body." As U.S. Marshal Michael Dyke told the news, the bodies of two out of every three people who go missing in San Francisco Bay are eventually recovered.^[35] During the investigation, Robert Checchi, a San Francisco police officer, said that at 1 a.m. on the morning of June 12, he saw an illegal boat in the bay near Alcatraz. A few minutes later, the boat left heading under the Golden Gate Bridge. This led to speculation that the prisoners might well have enlisted outside confederates to pick them up by boat.^{[36][37]} During the investigation, the FBI dismissed Checchi's account out of hand.

According to FBI reports, on July 17, 1962, a month after the escape, a Norwegian ship, *SS Noreffell*, spotted a body floating in the ocean 15 nautical miles (28 km; 17 mi) from the Golden Gate Bridge. The ship did not retrieve the body and did not report the sighting until October.^[38] San Francisco County Coroner Henry Turkel cast doubt on speculation that it could have been one of the escapees, emphasising the improbability that a body would still be floating on the surface of the ocean after more than a month; instead, Turkel proposed that the corpse may have been that of Cecil Phillip Herrman, a 34-year-old unemployed baker who had committed suicide by jumping from the Golden Gate Bridge five days earlier. Several coroners from

neighbouring counties challenged Turkel's opinion, stating that it was possible the remains had belonged to one of the escapees.^{[39][40]} Human bones were located eight months after the escape, having washed up on the shore to the north of the Golden Gate Bridge at Point Reyes, near the place where the Norwegian ship had spotted a body. The bones were recovered and buried under the name "John Bones Doe." At the time, a pathology report on the bones indicated that they had belonged to a man of Morris' age and height, but was otherwise inconclusive.

FBI investigators announced their official position to the public that, while it was theoretically possible for the men to have reached Angel Island, the odds of them having survived the turbulent currents and frigid waters of the bay were negligible.^[10] In what doubtless served to shore up the line of official denial, the final FBI report followed the disclosure that the escapees, as per West, had planned to steal clothes and a car upon reaching land, with the categorical insistence that no such thefts whatsoever were reported in the immediate area.^{[10][27]}

Aftermath

West was the only conspirator not to participate in the actual escape; he could not get his ventilator grill unstuck to leave his cell in time, so the others were forced to leave him behind. He fully cooperated with the investigation into the escape and was therefore not charged for his role.^{[41][42]}

West was transferred to McNeil Island, Washington, when Alcatraz was deactivated in 1963, and later, back to Atlanta Penitentiary. After serving his sentence, followed by two additional sentences in Georgia and Florida, he was released in 1967, only to be arrested again in Florida the following year on charges of grand larceny. At Florida State Prison, he fatally stabbed another inmate in October 1972, in what may have been a racially motivated incident. He was serving multiple sentences, including life imprisonment on the murder conviction, when he died of acute peritonitis in 1978.^[25]

On December 16, 1962, inmate John Paul Scott successfully swam a distance of 2.7 nautical miles (5.0 km; 3.1 mi) from Alcatraz to Fort Point, at the southern end of the Golden Gate Bridge. He was found there by teenagers, suffering from hypothermia and exhaustion.^[43] After recovering in Letterman General Hospital, he was immediately returned to Alcatraz.^[44] It is the only proven case of an Alcatraz inmate reaching the shore by swimming.^{[45][46][47]} Scott's escape, undertaken in slightly more unfavorable conditions than Morris and the Anglins faced, and using a means of flotation that was far inferior to the raft constructed by Morris and the Anglins (Scott made water wings by inflating stolen rubber gloves^[48]) shook the line of reasoning that Morris and the Anglins had likely drowned. Today, a multitude of athletes swim the same Alcatraz to Fort Point route as part of one of two annual triathlon events.^{[49][50]}

Because the penitentiary cost much more to operate than other prisons (nearly \$10 per prisoner per day, as opposed to \$3 per prisoner per day at Atlanta),^[51] and half a century of salt water saturation had severely eroded the buildings, then-Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy ordered the penitentiary closed on March 21, 1963.

The FBI closed its file on December 31, 1979, after a 17-year investigation.^[9] Their official finding was that the prisoners most likely drowned in the cold waters of the bay while attempting to reach Angel Island, it being unlikely that they made it the 1.25 miles (2.01 km) to shore with the strong ocean currents and the cold seawater temperatures ranging from 50 to 55 °F (10 to 13 °C). They cited the remnants found of the raft as well as the personal effects of the men, as evidence to bolster the official line that the raft broke up and sank at some point after having launched from Alcatraz and that the three convicts tried to swim for it, but then surely succumbed to hypothermia, their bodies swept to sea by the rapid currents of the San Francisco Bay.^{[5][6][7][10]}

However, the FBI did hand the investigation over to the U.S. Marshals Service, who have not closed theirs since. As Deputy U.S. Marshal Michael Dyke told NPR in 2009: "There's an active warrant, and the Marshals Service doesn't give up looking for people."^[52] Dyke also pointed out that the bodies of two out of every three people who go missing in San Francisco Bay are eventually recovered.^[35] The warrant for the missing men will expire between the years of 2026 and 2030 when the age of each of the three missing men will be between 99 and 100 years old, casting doubt that any one of them may be alive at that time.

Reported sightings

Since the escape of the three men, there have been many sightings of them reported and leads to their whereabouts submitted.

A day after the escape, a man claiming to be John Anglin called a lawyer, Eugenia MacGowan, in San Francisco to arrange a meeting with the U.S. Marshals office. When MacGowan refused, the caller terminated the phone call.^{[53][54]} The FBI dismissed the call as a prank.

In January 1965, the FBI investigated a rumor that Clarence Anglin was living in Brazil. It was considered so significant that agents were dispatched to South America to find him.

A male tipster called the Bureau in 1967 claiming to have been at school with Morris and having known him for 30 years. He said he had bumped into him in Maryland and described him as having "a small beard and moustache", but refused to give further details.^[55]

Family members of the Anglin brothers occasionally received many unsigned postcards and messages over the years. Once a card came signed "Jerry" and another "Jerry and Joe,"^{[56][57]} The family also produced a Christmas card, purportedly received in the family mailbox in 1962, saying, "To Mother, from John. Merry Christmas."^[54] Another of the Anglins' 11 siblings, Robert, also said that sometimes the phone would ring and all that could be heard was breathing on the other end; Robert said, "I suppose all that could have been pranks, but maybe it was my brothers."^[56] The mother of the Anglin brothers received flowers anonymously every Mother's Day until her death in 1973, and two very tall, unusual women in heavy makeup were reported to have attended her funeral before disappearing.^[56] Federal officials say that in the mid-to-late 1960s and into the 1970s there were "six or seven" sightings reported of the Anglin brothers, all in north Florida or Georgia. Robert also said that in 1989, when the father of the Anglin brothers died, two strangers in beards showed up at the funeral home. According to Robert, "They stood in front of the casket looking at the body a few minutes—they...wept—then, they walked out," he said.^[56]

In 1989, a woman who identified herself only as "Cathy" called *Unsolved Mysteries* tip line to report that she recognized a photo of Clarence Anglin, as a man who lived on a farm near Marianna, Florida. The brothers also were linked to the area by a woman, who recognized a photo of Clarence Anglin and said he lived near Marianna. She correctly identified his eye color, height, and other physical features. Another witness identified a sketch of Frank Morris, saying it bore a striking resemblance to a man she had seen in the area.^[58]

In the early 2000s, according to *The New York Times* best selling author Frank M. Ahearn, the US Marshals received a tip that one of the Anglin brothers was in Brazil. The US Marshals went down to Brazil and got a confirmation from a local bartender that one of the brothers was there.

Deputy U.S. Marshal Michael Dyke told NPR in 2009 that he still received leads on a regular basis.^[52]

Claims and developments

The escape was investigated in a segment by Robert Stack in 1989 on Unsolved Mysteries. Two theories were tested, one by having a triathlete swim from Alcatraz to the mainland and the other having three experienced kayakers paddle the same route in a replica of the raft used by the Anglins and Morris. While the rafters failed due to their raft being unseaworthy and had to be rescued by a motorboat that was shadowing their progress, the swimmer succeeded in making it to shore.

In 1993, a former Alcatraz inmate named Thomas Kent told the television program America's Most Wanted that he had helped plan the escape, and claimed to have provided "significant new leads" to investigators.^[59] He said that Clarence Anglin's girlfriend had agreed to meet the men on shore and drive them to Mexico. He declined to participate in the actual escape, he said, because he could not swim. Officials were skeptical of Kent's account, because he had been paid US\$2,000 for the interview.^[27]

Art Roderick, a retired Deputy U.S. Marshal, investigated a man named John Leroy Kelly (who died in 1993), who dictated an extended deathbed confession to his nurse. Kelly claimed that he and his partner picked up Morris and the Anglins from the bay in a boat and transported them to the Seattle Washington area. Later, under the guise of transporting the three escaped convicts to Canada, Kelly and his partner double crossed and murdered the escapees to get the \$40,000 their families had collected for them. Kelly, feeling lifelong guilt over his part, felt obligated to confess what he did to a priest and to his nurse.^[60] Roderick and others found a location in Seattle, where Kelly said the three escapees were buried. A dig at the site failed to turn up any bones.^[61]

Modern experimental and computer-simulated evidence has suggested that the ultimate outcome of the attempt may have depended on the exact time of the men's departure aboard the raft, and on whether they were sitting on top of the raft, using their paddles or partially submerged in the water, clinging to the raft and using their legs as the primary propelling force.

A 2003 MythBusters episode^[62] on the Discovery Channel tested the feasibility of an escape from the island aboard a raft constructed with the same materials and tools available to the inmates, and determined that it was possible.^[27] Contrary to the inmates' intended destination after escaping Alcatraz being Angel Island, the MythBusters theorized that the escapees used the tides to go to a different location. The makeshift raft crafted and crewed by the MythBusters team successfully made it across the bay and made it to the Marin Headlands. A portion of the scale tests (cut for time but later shown in MythBusters Outtakes) also show that debris found in the bay afterwards could have been released by the prisoners to float to where they were found through strategic use of the bay's tides to throw the authorities off their trail. The mythbusters explored the idea that the paddle that was found floated back into the bay in the direction of Angel Island after the prisoners made it to the Marin Headlands as a way to throw the FBI off the convicts' trail. Using a scale model of the San Francisco Bay area, the tide could have washed the paddle in the direction of Angel Island if released from the Marin Headlands, but as with their theory of how the escape could have succeeded, no concrete evidence existed to prove or disprove the theory.

When the case was transferred from the FBI to the US Marshals, all the files were examined in detail on a 2011 documentary on the National Geographic Channel entitled Vanished from Alcatraz. Michael Dyke, the Deputy U.S. Marshal, discovered in the newly uncovered official records, it was reported that, contrary to the official FBI report of the escapee's raft never being recovered and no car thefts being reported, a raft was discovered on Angel Island on June 12, 1962, the day after the escape. It was also reported that footprints were leading away from the raft. Furthermore, it was reported that a car, a 1955 blue Chevrolet (with Californian license plate; KPB-076), had been reported stolen in Marin County the day after the escape. It was also reported that at 11:30 a.m., on June 12, a motorist in Stockton, California (80 miles East of San Francisco) reported to the California Highway Patrol, that he had been forced off the road by three men in a blue Chevrolet.^{[63][61][57]} Researchers did some digging and discovered that the information was not new at all; several newspapers, such as Humboldt Times and San Francisco Examiner, actually reported the theft of a car, matching the story in the documents.^{[64][65][66]} According to Dyke, there were boats docked on the opposite side of Angel Island and so the inmates could have gained access to one of them and gotten to the mainland.

This discovery prompted speculation that officials knew of the evidence suggesting the trio survived, and that a cover-up of the evidence had taken place, along with them declaring the men drowned, not only to save Alcatraz's reputation as an "escape-proof" prison but to hope the escapees would relax and then become easier targets to find.^[27] During *Vanished from Alcatraz*, Marshal Dyke exhumed the remains of "John Bones Doe," and DNA from the bones was compared to a DNA sample from one of Morris's paternal relatives. The DNA did not match and so the bones were not Morris'.

That same year, an 89-year-old man named Bud Morris, who claimed he was a cousin of Frank Morris, claimed that on "eight or nine" occasions prior to the escape he delivered envelopes of money to Alcatraz guards, presumably as bribes. He further claimed to have met his cousin face to face in a San Diego park shortly after the escape. His daughter, who was "eight or nine" years old at the time, said she was present at the meeting with "Dad's friend, Frank", but "had no idea [about the escape]".^[67] His story and his relation to Morris has never been proven.

In 2012, the 50th anniversary of the escape attempt, Michael Dyke, the Deputy U.S. Marshal, conceded that he "still [receives] leads once in a while regarding the case and there are still active warrants."^[68] That same year, the Anglins' two sisters, Marie Anglin Winder and Mearl Anglin Taylor, and two of the Anglins' nephews, David and Kenneth Widner, made public their belief that another of the Anglins' 11 siblings, Alfred, who was electrocuted while attempting to escape from Kilby Prison in Montgomery Alabama in 1964, was actually beaten to death by guards because he would not help investigators locate his brothers.^[54]

A 2014 study of the ocean currents by scientists at Delft University and the research institute Deltares indicates that if the prisoners left Alcatraz at 11:30 pm on June 11, they could have made it to Horseshoe Bay just north of the Golden Gate Bridge, and that any debris released into the bay would have floated in the direction of Angel Island, consistent with where the paddle and belongings of the prisoners were actually found.^{[69][70]}

A 2015 History Channel documentary entitled *Alcatraz: Search for the Truth* presented further circumstantial evidence gathered over the years by the Anglin family.^[71] Kenneth and David Widner displayed Christmas cards containing the Anglins' handwriting, and allegedly received by family members for three years after the escape. While the handwriting was verified as the Anglins', none of the envelopes contained a postmarked stamp, so experts could not determine when they had been delivered.^[72] The family cited a story from family friend Fred Brizzi, who grew up with the brothers and claimed to have recognized them in Rio de Janeiro in 1975. They produced photographs taken, they said, by Brizzi, including one showing two men who, according to Brizzi were John and Clarence Anglin, standing next to a large termite mound, as well as several showing what they claimed was a Brazilian farm purportedly owned by the men. Forensic experts confirmed that the photos were taken in 1975, and asserted that the two men were "more than likely" the Anglins.^{[73][74]} Brizzi's story also presented an alternative escape theory; according to him, the escapees did not use the raft to cross the bay, but instead paddled around the island to the boat dock, where they then escaped by attaching a length of an electrical cord—which had been reported missing from the prison's dock on the night of the escape—to the rudder of a prison ferry boat that departed the island shortly after midnight, and were towed along behind it as it sailed to the mainland, after which they untied the cord, and paddled to the boat seen by eyewitness and former police officer Robert Checchi.^[75] During the documentary, the family gave permission for Alfred Anglin's body to be dug up from the family cemetery in Ruskin, Florida. A coroner did not find any significant trauma to Alfred, confirming his cause of death was most likely electrocution, but Alfred's DNA was compared with a sample from "John Bones Doe"; It was not a match and so the bones did not belong to either Anglin brother.

Art Roderick, working with the Anglin family, called Brizzi's photograph of the two men "absolutely the best actionable lead we've had," but added, "it could still all be a nice story which isn't true"; or the photograph could be a misdirection, aimed at steering the investigation away from the Anglins' actual whereabouts. Michael Dyke, the Deputy Marshal assigned to the case, said Brizzi was "a drug smuggler and a conman," and was suspicious of his account. Brizzi's widow has declared that she never heard him mention ever seeing the Anglin brothers in Rio, and she frankly admitted that he was "a con man" who was prone to making up

stories. An expert working for the U.S. Marshals Service compared measurements of the photo subjects' physical features to those of the Anglin brothers' arrest photos, believed it most likely is a picture of John and Clarence Anglin; although the age and condition of the photo, and the fact that both men were wearing sunglasses, hindered efforts to make a definitive determination.^[76]

Other circumstantial evidence included the deathbed confession of Robert Anglin, who is said to have told family members in 2010 that he had been in contact with John and Clarence from 1963 until approximately 1987. Surviving family members, who said they have heard nothing since Robert lost contact with the brothers in 1987, announced plans to travel to Brazil to conduct a personal search; but Roderick cautioned that they could be arrested by Brazilian authorities because the Alcatraz escape remains an open Interpol case.^[72]

In a 2016 episode of American PBS television series *Secrets of the Dead*, three Dutch scientists using tidal flow data tried to recreate the attempt. Creating handmade replicas of the raft and paddles, they tried for Horseshoe Bay, which they considered a more realistic landing site. While the rafters failed due to their raft being unseaworthy and had to be rescued by a motorboat that was shadowing their progress, they almost made it to the shore.

In 2018, the FBI confirmed that the existence of a letter, allegedly written by John Anglin, had compelled them to reopen the investigation into the case. The author of the letter, received by the San Francisco Police Department in 2013, asserts that Frank Morris died in 2008 and was buried in Alexandria under a different name and that Clarence Anglin died in 2011.^[77] The alleged Anglin further states that he has cancer, and wants to strike a deal with the FBI — offering to be locked up again for a year in exchange for medical care.^[77] When analyzed for a link to Anglin, it was deemed inconclusive.^[78]

The U.S. Marshals office is still investigating this case, which will remain open on all three escapees until their 100th birthdays.^[61]

On an episode of the series *Mission Declassified* (2019), investigative journalist Christof Putzel investigated the escape. Paddling with two other men in a replica of the makeshift raft used by the Anglins and Morris, they determined that due to the shifting tide, it is plausible that the trio could have paddled to Angel Island without a great degree of difficulty. Noting the documents mentioning a raft being found on Angel Island, and the 1955 blue Chevrolet being stolen, Putzel combed through hundreds of documents and discovered various reports mentioning a Chevy of the same description making its way across the country over a couple of months after the escape. According to one report two weeks after the escape, a Chevy was spotted in Oklahoma with men who met the description of the escapees,^[79] a Chevy discovered in Indiana,^[80] a Chevy spotted in Ohio,^[81] and in South Carolina, three months after the initial escape, three men matching the description of the Anglin brothers and Frank Morris trying to acquire a hideout in the woods.^[82] Interviewing Kenneth Widner, Widner had to say about Morris; "in letters and conversations I've had with certain people, there's a very good indication that he left; I did kind of hear where I thought he went". Putzel traveled to Taubaté, Brazil, where he discovered that there was a farm, called "The Farm of the Americans", and learned that residents recalled of two American men renting the farm and living there from 1965 to the 1970s and discovered the nearby site of the 1975 photograph, called El Dutra, discovering similar large termite mounds similar to the one in the photo.

In January 2020, Rothco, an Irish creative agency, teamed up with AI specialists at Identv to analyze the alleged photo of the Anglin brothers in Brazil. Using facial recognition techniques, a convolutional neural network was trained on past images of the brothers and confirmed with high confidence that the identities of the men in the photo were John and Clarence Anglin.^[83]

In popular culture

J. Campbell Bruce's 1963 book *Escape from Alcatraz* documents the 1962 escape, along with other escape attempts over the 29 years that Alcatraz Island served as a prison.^[84]

The film *Escape from Alcatraz* (1979) stars Clint Eastwood, Fred Ward, and Jack Thibeu as Frank Morris, John Anglin, and Clarence Anglin, respectively. West (fictionalized as a character named Charley Butts) was played by Larry Hankin.^[85]

The escape was shown in a two-part 1980 TV movie made by Telepictures Corporation (now owned by Warner Bros.): *Alcatraz: The Whole Shocking Story*, which starred Ed Lauter as Morris, and Louis Giambalvo and Antony Ponzini as the Anglins.

Terror on Alcatraz (1987) stars Aldo Ray as Morris, returning decades later to the scene of his escape from Alcatraz and scouring his old prison cell for a map to a safe deposit box key.

See also

- List of fugitives from justice who disappeared

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