

TIME

Daredevil Escapes from Locked Box Dropped from 14,500 Feet

Wisconsin thrill-seeker repeats a stunt he did 25 years ago to promote his new book

By [Olivia B. Waxman](#) @OBWaxAug. 07, 2013

In a stunt that seems like every claustrophobe's worst nightmare, a daredevil successfully escaped from handcuffs and a locked box dropped from an airplane [14,500 feet in the air](#) Tuesday — in less than a minute.

Here's how it worked, according to the [Associated Press](#): a plane took off in Ottawa, Illinois, southwest of Chicago. When it reached about 14,500 feet, Wisconsin escape artist [Anthony Martin](#), 47, was helped into the box, and his hands were handcuffed to his belt. Then he was locked inside with a prison door lock that doesn't have a key.

A small parachute called a drogue attached to the top of the box was "tossed" from the door, pushing the whole thing out of the aircraft. The box was supposed to be plummeting [at 140 mph](#). While two men were positioned on either side to keep it stable, it kept rocking back and forth, which was "disorienting," as Martin told the AP afterwards.

The AP reports that at about 6,500 feet, Martin pried open the lock within 30 seconds, busted open the door, and "somersaulted" out. He then activated a parachute and landed safely on a farm in nearby Serena, Illinois. (You can watch this [exclusive video](#) of the escape from ABC News to see it from a different angle.)

Martin, who has been picking locks since he was six years old, told reporters after the jump, "Praise God it all went good. It's good to be here and it's good to be alive." He told [Good Morning America](#) that most of his training for the jump focused on skydiving, not lockpicking or escaping, since he does both of those stunts on the ground all the time.

The Aug. 6 feat marked the 25th anniversary of the first time he pulled it off during his 17th skydive at age 22 —not to mention the release of his new book [*Escape or Die: An Escape Artist Unlocks the Secret to Cheating Death*](#). Past stunts include another aerial handcuff escape over Snake River Canyon, escaping from a locked metal cage submerged in ice water, and freeing himself from a locked jail cell while bound in a straight jacket. He has also been a regular on [Ripley's Believe It or Not!](#).