Albanian Arrested After Second Prison Break

An Albanian convict who had escaped from an Athens high security prison in February using a helicopter was arrested again on Monday, Greek media reported. This was the convict's second escape attempt in three years.

Rizai was arrested after a Greek police operation in Northern Athens.

In a prison break worthy of a Hollywood action movie, Alket Rizai and Vassilis Paleokostas – the ringleader of the Rizai gang -- escaped after accomplices highjacked the helicopter, flew it to Korydallos prison and threw a rope down to the rooftop.

The helicopter was later found abandoned on a highway, with the pilot bound and gagged with a hood over his head.

Paleokastas and Rizai, who were incarcerated for a string of bank robberies, escaped the same prison in Athens in 2006 after a highjacked helicopter landed on the prison yard during exercise time and left the prison with ease, while guards believed the chopper was an inspection by prison officials. During the second escape, guards shot at the helicopter but were unable to stop it or the convicts from fleeing.

Rizai, 32, from the town of Ballsh in Southern Albania, is suspected of involvement in contract killings following his first escape from prison on June 4, 2006. He was recaptured in September 2006, aided by an Albanian relative during his time on the run.

Greek authorities believe that the first escape was masterminded by Nikos, the elder brother of Paleokostas, who was himself captured by authorities in Sept 2006. Nikos Paleokostas, a criminal convicted of sixteen bank robberies, escaped the same prison in the early 1990's.

Vassilis Paleokostas, while on the run after his first escape, is suspected of masterminding the June 2008 kidnapping of Giorgos Mylonas, a Greek industrialist who was held for 13 days until a ransom was paid. Paleokostas remains at large.