

Report by prison keeper Thomas Sheldon – September 7, 1801:

Prison of Newgate, Sept. 7, 1801.

An attempt was made this morning by the convicts to affect an escape. One Millard (a noted villain) took upon himself the lead in this diabolical plan, and to be seconded by several gallows eyed negroes, three of which were sentenced here by the Honorable Superior Court at their last fittings in the Counties of N. Haven and Fairfield. To affect their purpose, they on Sunday while in the upper apartments, and in the night season when below, had a number of them completely unshackle themselves, by getting the heads of the bolts of their shackles off, and in this situation could have immediately been perfectly at liberty. Their determination was (they now confess) to make a rush on the guard, as soon as their commander see a favorable opportunity and was then to give order for a general charge.

But fortunately as one of the suborinate [subordinate] officers was visiting the caverns in the night season, he found at the foot of the ladder the cap of one of their bolts which led to an immediate inspection as soon as they were taken out for labor, and found on inspection, that a number of them were in the situation above mentioned, and that they had substituted leather caps, to deceive the officer whose duty it was to lock them to their blocks that day. That the public may not be misinformed respecting the business I take this method to inform them, that, nothing very unfavorable hath yet happened and that theise [these] desperate villains are yet in safe custody.

THOMAS SHELDEN, *Prison-Keeper*