

# Ratlines on the American Left

by [G. Murphy Donovan](#) (July 2017)



Once upon a time, ratlines were horizontal ropes in a ship's rigging that allowed a sailor to scale the lines or climb a ship's mast. On a sinking ship, rat lines were the last refuge for rodents and unlucky tars that couldn't swim or didn't make it into a lifeboat. Today, rat lines are thought to be euphemisms for any desperate avenue of escape or last ditch tactics. [more>>>](#)