

STATEMENT

As Secretary of State, one of Matt Dunlap's directors helped an illegal immigrant obtain a driver's license after meeting him at a bar. That man then used the license to purchase a gun and rob a bank. Dunlap did not reprimand the director, saying "there's nothing to discipline him for."

Verification

Dunlap Served Over 14 Nonconsecutive Years As Maine's Secretary Of State

From December 2004 To January 2011, Dunlap Served As Secretary Of State. "Oversight of Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions, State Archives, and Central Office. Worked with legislature on budget and policy matters, troubleshooting of issues with individuals, organizations, and many municipal governments as well as other state agencies, the Federal government, and other states. Wrote and presented department testimony on legislation, worked with schools, gave road tests, and generally supported the work of a staff of nearly 450 dedicated state employees." (Matt Dunlap, [LinkedIn](#), Accessed 7/1/26)



Secretary of State

State of Maine

Dec 2004 - Jan 2011 · 6 yrs 2 mos

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(Matt Dunlap, [LinkedIn](#), Accessed 7/1/26)

From January 2013 To January 2021, Dunlap Served As Secretary Of State. (Matt Dunlap, [LinkedIn](#), Accessed 7/1/26)



State of Maine

13 yrs 7 mos



Maine State Auditor

Jan 2021 - Present · 5 yrs 7 mos



49th Secretary of State

Jan 2013 - Jan 2021 · 8 yrs 1 mo

148 State House Station, 103 Sewall Street, Augusta, Maine 04333

(Matt Dunlap, [LinkedIn](#), Accessed 7/1/26)

Dunlap Cleared Robert O'Connell, A Director At The Bureau Of Motor Vehicles, Of Any Wrongdoing After He Helped An Illegal Immigrant Obtain An ID Which He Used To Buy A Gun And Rob A Bank

In 2006, Robert O'Connell Was Working As The Bureau Of Motor Vehicles' Director Of Licensing Services. "Robert O'Connell, the BMV's director of licensing services, helped Clarke obtain a Maine driver's license believing the Irishman was in the country illegally, court documents reveal. Clarke's visa expired two weeks after he obtained a Maine driver's license in April 2006." (Judy Harrison, "License Helps Man Obtain Weapon," Bangor Daily News, 2/15/08)

The Maine Bureau Of Motor Vehicles Is Housed Under The Department Of The Secretary Of State. "The Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles, within the constitutional office of the Department of the Secretary of State, was established in 1905 out of concern for public safety following the invention, mass production, and use of automobiles." (Bureau Of Motor Vehicles, [Department Of The Secretary Of State](#), Accessed 7/8/26)

In March 2006, Robert O'Connell Met Niall Clarke's In A Boston Bar And Explained How He Could Get A License In Maine, Despite Believing Clark Was In The Country Illegally. "[Niall] Clarke, who was living and working as a carpenter in Boston in March 2006, told [Robert] O'Connell that he was having trouble getting a license in Massachusetts because of his illegal immigration status. O'Connell told Clarke, according to court documents, that if he were living in Maine, he would be able to get a license. The men exchanged e-mail addresses and over the next month O'Connell told Clarke how to get a license in Maine. (Judy Harrison, "License Helps Man Obtain Weapon," Bangor Daily News, 2/15/08)

O'Connell Then Personally Expedited Clarke's Application For A License. "O'Connell, who still heads the licensing division, went further, according to court documents, and personally expedited the handling of Clarke's application. O'Connell also e-mailed to Clarke the name of a friend in Portland who had a small construction firm where the Irishman might find work." (Judy Harrison, "License Helps Man Obtain Weapon," Bangor Daily News, 2/15/08)

On October 3, 2006, Clarke Used The License To Purchase A Semiautomatic Handgun. "Clarke used the license as identification on Oct. 3, 2006, to buy a Versa 380 semiautomatic handgun from Maine Military Supply on Wilson Street in Brewer. He lied on the application and said he was a U.S. citizen. Clarke, who has never been married, told the salesman he was buying the gun for his wife for protection, according to court documents. He also was \$30,000 in debt." (Judy Harrison, "Gun-Toting Bangor Robber Gets 10 Years In Bank Heist," Bangor Daily News, 2/20/08)

On October 4, 2006, Clarke Used The Gun To Rob A Bank, Stealing Over \$11,000. "About 1:30 p.m. the next day, a masked Clarke entered the bank with the gun drawn, pointed it at tellers and demanded they fill a mesh bag with cash, Woodcock said at the sentencing. He shouted at bank employees and threatened the manager when she picked up a phone to alert police. Bank employees were clear-headed enough to give police the license plate number of the robber's car. Clarke apparently exited the bank parking lot onto Bangor Mall Boulevard, then turned left onto Hogan Road then right onto Stillwater Avenue. A Bangor police detective in the area in an unmarked car spotted Clarke and followed him to Kelly Road and onto the southbound lanes of Interstate 95 where at least half a dozen state police cruisers were waiting for him. Additional troopers were at the Orono barracks when the robbery was reported and responded to an alert for help. After stopping and jumping out of his car, Clarke ran about 20 feet before he surrendered. The more than \$11,000 he took from the bank was recovered." (Judy Harrison, "Gun-Toting Bangor Robber Gets 10 Years In Bank Heist," Bangor Daily News, 2/20/08)

In February 2008, Clarke Was Sentenced To Almost Ten Years In Prison. "Niall Clarke, 27, an award-winning graduate of Trinity College in Dublin, showed no emotion as U.S. District Judge John Woodcock sentenced him to 33 months in prison for the armed robbery on Oct. 4, 2006, of the Bank of America branch near the Bangor Mall. Woodcock sentenced Clarke to an additional seven years because he brandished a gun." (Judy Harrison, "Gun-Toting Bangor Robber Gets 10 Years In Bank Heist," Bangor Daily News, 2/20/08)

In February 2008, Dunlap Said He Would Cooperate With An External Investigation Into O'Connell And Would Determine Whether Or Not He Broke State Laws Or Department Policies Based On Their Findings. "Dunlap said Tuesday that his department would cooperate fully with the external investigation that has been contracted with an outside, independent investigator by the Attorney General's Office. Dunlap said his department would be paying for the investigation, though he had yet to sign the contract or be interviewed by the investigator. 'I know people are screaming for Bob's blood, but I think we have to be responsive to the situation in a formal manner and that's why I took the attorney general's advice about conducting an investigation,' Dunlap said. 'Hopefully, we'll get this done fairly quickly and then I think we need to move on.'" Dunlap said the investigation would determine whether O'Connell violated any state laws or department policies by assisting Clarke in obtaining a license." (Walter Griffin, "Official Probed For Helping Irishman Get License," Bangor Daily News, 2/20/08)

In June 2008, After The Investigation Concluded, Dunlap Cleared O'Connell Of All Wrongdoing, Saying "He Is Now Clear" And "There Has Been So Discipline Because There's Nothing To Discipline Him For." "The state official who helped an Irish national obtain a Maine driver's license that later was instrumental in the purchase of a handgun used in a bank robbery has been cleared of any wrongdoing. Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap said the investigation into the behavior of Robert O'Connell was concluded last week. O'Connell is the director of licensing services for the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and has worked with the department for 24 years. 'We cannot conclude that he violated any laws or rules,' Dunlap said Monday. 'He is now clear and it is now over. There has been no discipline because there's nothing to discipline him for.'" (Walter Griffin, "State Motor Vehicles Official Cleared In Bank Robbery Case," Bangor Daily News, 6/24/08)