

# MANHUNT IS PRESSED FOR JAMES EARL RAY; ONE CONVICT GIVES UP

## INGENIOUS ESCAPE DESCRIBED

Force of 150 Reported Closing In  
—Convicted Slayer of Dr. King  
Plotted Break, Officials Say

By WAYNE KING

Special to The New York Times

PETROS, Tenn., June 11—A force of 150 prison guards, state and local policemen, sheriff's deputies and agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation used helicopters and bloodhounds today to search the rugged mountains near here for James Earl Ray and four other inmates who escaped from the Brushy Mountain Penitentiary last night.

A sixth member of the group, David Lee Powell, 27 years old, gave up quietly shortly before 2 P.M. today when he was sighted by a state police helicopter as he strode across a field eight miles west of the prison.

Mr. Powell, the only black among the inmates who escaped, was returned to the prison in handcuffs. He is serving a term of 100 years for first-degree murder.

A spokesman for the Department of Public Safety said the captured inmate did not appear to have been part of the original escape plot. "He just saw the [escape] ladder on the wall and ran for it."

It was not known whether others among the escapers also acted on impulse.

Meanwhile, officials said they believed they were closing in on Mr. Ray and the four others still at large. They said the group had probably split up.

### Ray Is Called Organizer

At the prison, officials offered the view that the ingeniously executed bolt over the wall of the maximum security facility had been conceived and organized by Mr. Ray himself. The break was carried out with almost flawless precision.

C. Murray Henderson, the Tennessee Commissioner of Corrections, said he was sure that Mr. Ray had organized the es-

cape.

"He might have had one other man help him," Mr. Henderson said. "It's true he was basically a loner, but I'm sure he wanted to get as many involved as he could, but would likely split off from the rest now."

"He's hot, hotter than any of them. They'd want him to split off."

In Washington, the Federal Bureau of Investigation placed Mr. Ray on its 10 Most Wanted List and began distributing 40,000 fliers bearing pictures and a description of the convicted killer. [Page 37.]

### Report to President

At the same time, Attorney General Griffin B. Bell returned to the capital from Hot Springs, Va., to monitor the progress of the manhunt. He telephoned President Carter this morning to give him a "status report."

Mr. Ray, serving 99 years as the confessed killer of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., scrambled over a 14-foot prison wall along with five other inmates on a makeshift ladder about 7:30 P.M. yesterday and made off into the cool night and the rugged Smoky Mountains behind the prison.

A seventh prisoner who tried to escape was shot by guards in a tower as he mounted the wall. He was captured after

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stumbling a few yards on the other side of the wall. He was treated at an Oak Ridge hospital and returned to the prison.

State police helicopters swept over the countryside all day today. Officials said they believed the men were still in the area. By noon today, Commissioner Henderson was saying privately that the men were surrounded and capture was "just a matter of hours."

Late tonight, Stonney R. Lane, the prison warden, who had been on vacation in Texas at the time of the escape, said that he was "confident" the remaining escapers were still within a 10-mile radius of Brushy Mountain.

"I don't think they'll move after dark," he said. "We don't expect anything to happen until after daybreak." The warden said that all roads leading away from the prison areas were "carefully covered."

He said that the prisoner recaptured this afternoon had provided no details about how the escape was executed and that a full investigation was under way.

The escape showed all the earmarks of careful planning and organization.

The escape was aided by the incapacitation of the prison telephone system, the absence of guards in the No. 8 Tower, the one nearest the site of the break, and the darkness that fell over the tangled mountainsides less than an hour after the break. Guards quickly sealed off a tunnel leading from the rear wall to the front of the prison, a channel for a creek that runs under the prison grounds.

According to the accounts of Commissioner Henderson, Assistant Warden Clayton Davis and other officials, the escape occurred as about 250 inmates milled about, played basketball and pitched horseshoes in the nine-acre open recreation area at the rear of the 12-acre walled prison compound.

Suddenly, a staged fight broke out among a number of inmates some 200 yards from the rear wall that the escapers mounted.

### Ladder Thrown Up

As other inmates screamed and shouted, falling over each other in the melee, Mr. Ray and his companions bolted toward the wall at the northwest corner of the prison compound, near a sheer, 175-foot cliff of solid rock.

Swiftly, the men put up a 10-foot ladder, which officials said was fabricated from half-inch water pipe—not from wire, as had been reported last night.

The men hooked the ladder over the top of the two-foot-thick wall, and began scrambling over, snaking under two strands of barbed wire strung 14 to 16 inches from the top of the wall. The wire carries 2,300 volts of electricity.

Guards in turrets overlooking the yard were distracted by the confusion and apparently failed to notice until the last man was topping the wall.

From the No. 3 Tower, about 175 yards away, guards opened fire with a shotgun and a .22-caliber rifle, wounding Jerry



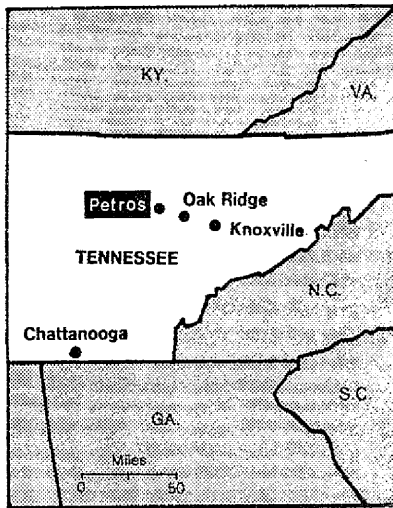
Associated Press

The six inmates who fled with James Earl Ray are, clockwise from top left: Earl Hill Jr.; David Lee Powell who later surrendered to authorities, Larry Edward Hacker, Douglas Shelton, Donald Ray Caylor and Jerry Wayne Ward, who was shot by guards as he was climbing prison wall.



United Press International

Clayton Davis, Deputy Warden of prison, holding makeshift ladder used by inmates to climb over wall.



The New York Times/June 12, 1977

Wayne Ward, a 34-year-old bank robber serving a 40-year sentence.

The No. 8 tower, closer to where the men scaled the wall, is not manned except in "alert" or "emergency" situations.

As escape sirens began to wail, Mr. Ward toppled from the wall to the outside, struggled a few steps and fell to the ground, wounded superficially with a .22-caliber bullet and a pellet from a shotgun.

Prison officials rushed to telephones to broadcast an alert as the six others scurried off into the dense woods. None of the telephones worked.

"I didn't have a telephone for an hour and a half," said Deputy Warden Davis. "I had to send a man six miles to report the escape, at the Morgan County Sheriff's Office."

Mr. Davis himself had been alerted by radio, and reached the prison about five minutes after the break alarm had been sounded.

State officials in Nashville said the phone system, an independent cooperative operated as the Highland Telephone Cooperative, was overloaded by large numbers of subscribers calling about the prison alarm.

Gov. Ray Blanton said today that he

had directed search officials to use "extreme caution" and "all possible restraint."

"The extremely sensitive circumstances regarding the Congressional and other investigations of the James Earl Ray case make it imperative that he be returned to custody safely and at the earliest possible moment," the Governor said.

He also said he had asked other government agencies to use the same restraint and caution.

The wild, mountainous area behind the prison covers thousands of acres, and is accessible only by a paved road about five miles from the prison and by a rough network of dirt roads and logging trails. Because of the ruggedness of the terrain, only about five trails lead out of the wild, even for those on foot.

At least three of the escapers had been residents of the general area and might have been familiar with the terrain.

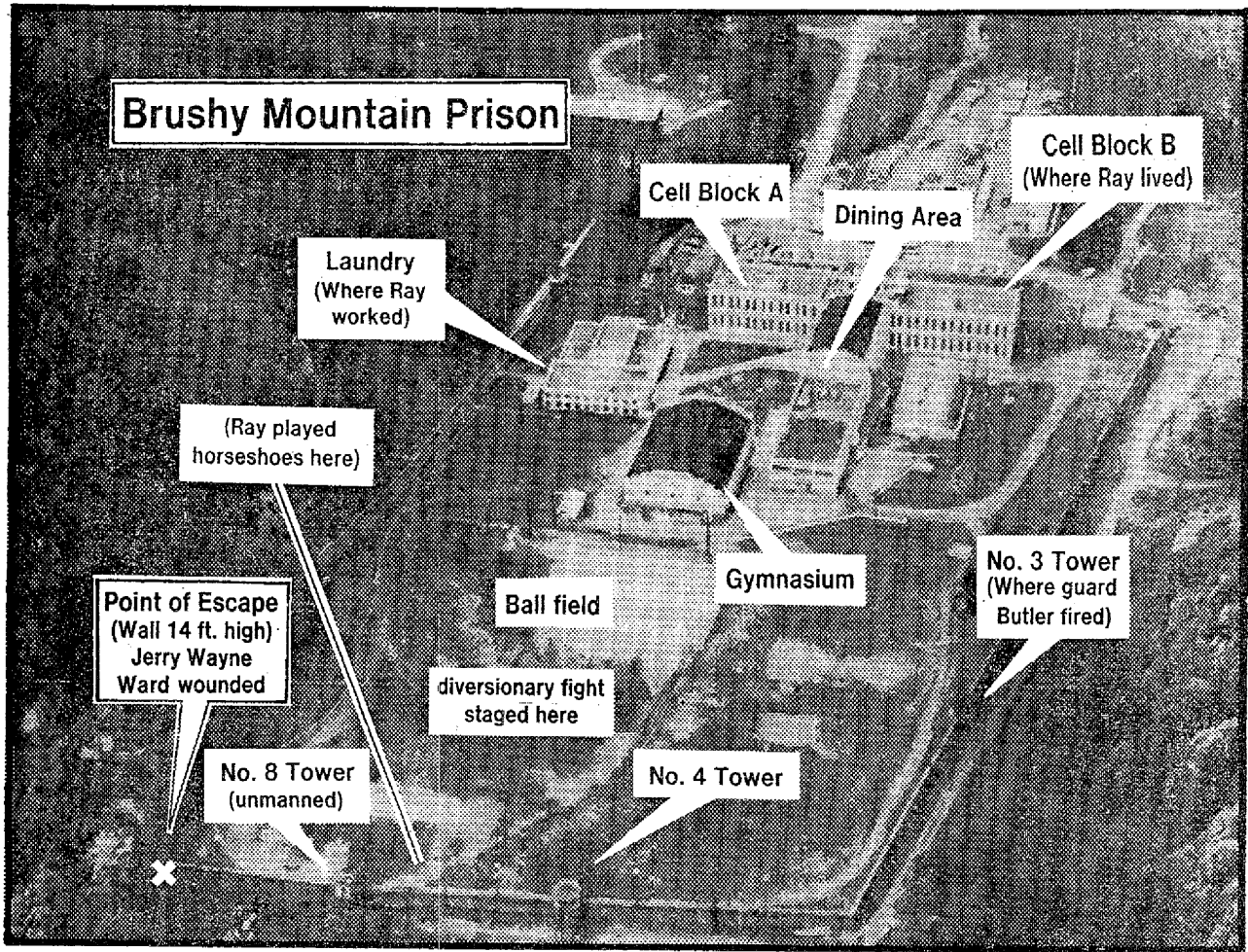
#### Other Fugitives

These three are Donald Ray Caylor, 24 years old, of Knoxville, serving 51 years for assault with a deadly weapon, armed robbery and escape; Earl Hill Jr., 34, of Washington County, Mr. Ray's cellmate on Cellblock B, serving two life terms plus 27 years for first degree murder, assault with attempt to murder and rape; and Douglas Shelton, 32, of Kingsport, serving 65 years for first degree murder, felonious assault and grand larceny.

Mr. Shelton worked in the prison plumbing shop and was believed to have fabricated the water pipe ladder. It was assembled from five three-foot sections of pipe, with shorter sections for steps and an arching hook to serve as a grapple over the wall.

The short sections of the assembly apparently enabled the men to sneak the pieces into the prison yard in trouser legs and to assemble and hide the ladder there. The ladder had freshly cut threads and wrench marks.

Also involved in the escape was Larry Edward Hacker, 32, of Hamilton, Ohio, serving 28 years for burglary, safecracking and robbery.



The New York Times/June 12, 1977

Neither Mr. Ward, the man who was shot as he reached the top of the wall, nor Mr. Powell, who was captured later, was armed.

Commissioner Henderson described all seven men as "hard core offenders" with good reason to attempt escape. He brushed aside suggestions that Mr. Ray had made the bold and dangerous scramble over the wall to avoid testifying be-

fore a Congressional inquiry into the King assassination. Mr. Ray has been undergoing interviews in the course of that inquiry.

The Commissioner noted that Mr. Ray had made other attempts to escape from the Brushy Mountain prison: once in May 1971, when he slipped from his cell, leaving behind a dummy in his bunk, and tried to go through a steam tunnel, only to be captured; and again in February

1972, when he slipped away from his work area and was caught trying to cut a hole through the ceiling.

Mr. Ray had been a fugitive from Missouri State Prison for a year when Dr. King was shot to death on April 4, 1968.

Commissioner Henderson said Mr. Ray had had numerous visits from his lawyer, Jack Kershaw, and a visit five days ago from his younger brother, Jerry, who lives in Chicago.