



Associated Press

Warden Stoney Lane, left, escorting James Earl Ray back to prison

RAY BACK IN CUSTODY, TENNESSEE GOVERNOR ASKS U.S. TO TAKE HIM

CONVICT 'O.K.' BUT EXHAUSTED

He Refuses to Tell the Authorities
About Escape—Blanton Hints
Court Undermined Security

By B. DRUMMOND AYRES Jr.

Special to The New York Times

PETROS, Tenn., June 13—James Earl Ray, recaptured early today after 54 hours of freedom, was placed in a "maximum custody" section of Brushy Mountain Penitentiary late today as the authorities began an investigation of his escape into the mountains.

Tonight, Gov. Ray Blanton of Tennessee called on the Federal Government to take over custody of Mr. Ray, who is 49 years old and is serving 99 years for the slaying of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The Governor charged that the Federal Government had "hampered" Tennessee's attempts to keep Mr. Ray behind walls by insisting that he be allowed to mingle freely with other prisoners.

Prison officials said that Mr. Ray was given a brief physical examination and then was put in a specially guarded cell block occupied by other prisoners with disciplinary problems. He was reported to be scratched and exhausted from his

NEW YORK, TUESDAY, JUNE 14, 1977

two-day flight through oak thickets and rocky ravines but otherwise in good condition.

Refused to Answer Questions

Mr. Ray has a long history of crime and prison escape attempts and was at large from a Missouri penitentiary when Dr. King was shot in 1968.

The latest escape attempt could result in up to five more years being added to his sentence. The Tennessee authorities said that a special hearing, to be held in the next few days, would determine how much additional punishment should be added, if any.

Prison officials said that Mr. Ray was not cooperative when questioned about the escape attempt. "We're trying to get

the details, but he's not much help," Becca Cottrill, a penitentiary spokesman, said. "We asked, 'Where did you go?' He said, 'Out.' We asked, 'What did you do?' He said, 'Nothing.'"

Of the five men who went over the penitentiary wall with Mr. Ray late Friday afternoon, only one, Douglas Shelton, remained at large. He was thought to be in the same general area where Mr. Ray and several other escapers were recaptured.

Mr. Ray was captured shortly before 3 A.M. today by prison dog handlers, only eight miles from the prison.

Although the Tennessee authorities said

Continued on Page 28, Column 1

Continued From Page 1

there was no evidence that Mr. Ray had had any outside assistance in his escape, they did not rule out the possibility.

Mr. Ray has asserted repeatedly that the slaying was part of a conspiracy. Several investigators from the House Select Committee on Assassinations, which is investigating the King slaying, arrived in Petros soon after Mr. Ray went over the wall. After he had been recaptured this morning, Robert Lehner, the committee's chief investigator, said:

"I cannot report as to whether there was any aid from the outside. No evidence has been found. One possibility is that he acted alone. Another possibility is that there was outside help. There is even a possibility that he was a latecomer to the escape."

The escape, which set off one of the biggest manhunts in Tennessee history, already has resulted in plans to strengthen security measures at the 440-inmate penitentiary here.

In Governor's Blanton's request that the Federal Government take custody of Mr. Ray, he noted that Tennessee had "restricted" his contact with other prisoners. Mr. Ray had then appealed to Federal courts, Governor Blanton said, and had persuaded them to order that he be allowed to mingle with the general

prison population.

"We are hampered by the Federal Court order in our efforts to secure this prisoner," the Governor asserted.

Governor Blanton, according to a United Press International report, said, "Considering that James Earl Ray was convicted of murdering a figure of national prominence; that he was an escapee from a Missouri state prison at the time of this murder; that he has made one escape from behind the walls in Tennessee and attempted two others, and considering the immense cost and that we are hampered by a Federal Court order in our efforts to secure this prisoner, I am requesting that the Federal Government accept custody of James Earl Ray."

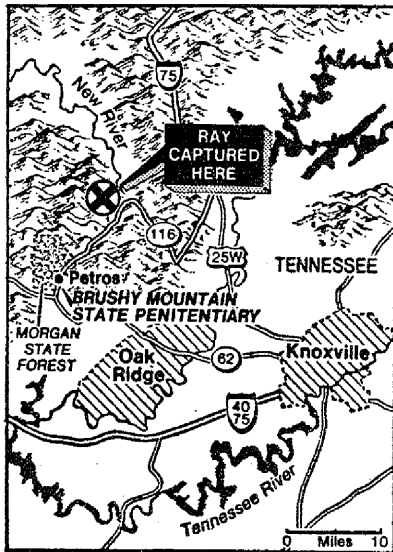
Governor Blanton said that Mr. Ray's breakout and search cost the state \$178,000, most of it in overtime pay for the manhunters.

In Washington, Norman Carlson, United



The New York Times

Earl Hill Jr., cellmate of James Earl Ray, being returned to Brushy Mountain prison after capture.



The New York Times/June 14, 1977

States Prisons Director, said that the request would be taken under consideration, according to U.P.I.

Mr. Ray has been assigned to the Brushy Mountain prison for about a year. Before that, he was an inmate at a Nashville prison. He was transferred, the authorities said, because this little village's isolation deep in the Cumberland Mountains makes escape particularly difficult.

Changes Planned at Prison

C. Murray Henderson, the state Commissioner of Corrections, announced that "some corrections" would have to be made. Among them, he listed repositioning guard towers, strengthening walls and adding new fences.

The escapers used a hand-fashioned pipe ladder to go over the wall. They placed it at a point clear of electric wires and remote from guard towers. About the time they jumped to the ground and scattered into the heavily wooded adjacent hills, the prison's electrical and telephone systems inexplicably went dead. The investigation of the escape is expected to deal in part with those two breakdowns.

Three prisoners have been charged with staging the fight that distracted prison guards from the escapers.

The prison warden, Stonney R. Lane, said tonight that although none of the escapers, particularly Mr. Ray, would discuss the escape, initial indications were that he, Douglas Shelton, the only prisoner still at large, and Earl Hill Jr., Mr.

Ray's cellmate, formulated the plan. Mr. Lane noted that Mr. Shelton worked in the prison plumbing shop and that the escape ladder was made from plumbing pipe.

In the "maximum custody" section, Mr. Ray is under what the prison authorities call "administrative segregation."

"That means we can guard him more closely for what he has just done and that he will mingle with fewer other prisoners," Mr. Cottrill, the prison spokesman, said. "It is temporary and will be discussed at his hearing in a few days."

At the hearing, Mr. Ray could be stripped of any "good time" he might have accrued toward an early release. The hearing could also result in a recommendation that he be indicted for the escape attempt.

When sentenced in 1969, he was informed that under Tennessee law he would be eligible for consideration for parole after serving one-third of the sentence, or 33 years. By accruing the maximum amount of "good time" for good behavior, he could have reduced that period to 30 years.

The other escapers also were placed in "administrative segregation" after being recaptured. They were Donald Ray Caylor, 24 years old, of Knoxville, serving 51 years for assault with a deadly weapon, armed robbery and escape; Mr. Hill, 34, of Washington County, Tennessee, Mr. Ray's cellmate, serving two life terms plus 27 years for first-degree murder, assault with attempt to murder and rape; Larry Edward Hacker, 32, of Hamilton, Ohio, serving 28 years for burglary, safe-cracking and robbery, and David Lee Powell, 27 years old, serving 100 years for first-degree murder.

The convict still at large, Mr. Shelton, of Kingsport, is 32 years old and is serving 65 years for first-degree murder, felonious assault and grand larceny.

The other escapers also were placed in "administrative segregation" when recaptured and, like Mr. Ray, will be given special hearings to determine punishment. In the special section, Mr. Ray and Mr. Hill are again cellmates.

Mr. Ray's lawyer, Jack Kershaw of Nashville, said tonight that he would come to Petros tomorrow to see his client and attempt to represent him. Prison authorities said that Mr. Kershaw would not be permitted, under Tennessee law, to see Mr. Ray while he was being interrogated by penitentiary officials but would be allowed to advise him in any session with the House assassination committee.