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James Earl Ray

Bungles Escape

PETROS (Tenn.) — (UPI) — James Earl Ray, the slayer of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., has bungled another attempt to escape from prison.

State Corrections Commissioner Mark Luttrell said yesterday the attempt occurred Feb. 5 and resulted in Ray being put back in a disciplinary cell at the maximum security Brushy Mountain State Prison.

"He was found crawling to or from a place where he could work and not be seen," Luttrell said.

Warden Robert Moore said Ray had acquired a makeshift handsaw and was attempting to saw a hole through the ceiling of a room adjoining an auditorium where inmates watched movies.

The lights came on too soon, Moore said, and the guards saw Ray slipping out of his secluded work area.

Last May, Ray concocted an elaborate plan to escape

that would have led him through a maze of steam tunnels to freedom.

But that attempt also aborted and nearly ended in Ray's death because the tunnel he chose was heated to 400 degrees by the pipelines.

Moore said that in addition to the makeshift saw, Ray had a hammer, a block and tackle, and a bit. He also had some "plastic wood" that he used to conceal his work.

The warden said Ray went before the prison's disciplinary board on Feb. 9 and he was sentenced to 30 days in a disciplinary cell. That means Ray will have no privileges other than to receive his meals and mail.