

Last Convict Caught in the Ray Escape

Petros, Tenn.

The last of five convicts who broke out of Brushy Mountain Penitentiary last Friday with James Earl Ray was run down and captured early yesterday, bringing an end to one of the biggest manhunts in Tennessee history.

As the scratched and weary convict, Douglas Shelton, was put back behind bars, the prison steam whistle shrieked a long "all clear" that could be heard for miles in the surrounding Cumberland mountains.

Prison officials said they are certain that the entire five-day escape episode was "routine" and had involved no outside help.

"We're fully convinced there was no outside conspiracy," Warden Stonney Lane said. "The escape and recapture followed the usual pattern. Now all we have to do is determine if any negligence was involved. We are conducting an investigation."

There had been some speculation that Ray, the convicted assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., might have planned the breakout with outside assistance.

Ray, who is serving 99 years for shooting the civil rights leader in Memphis in 1968, was captured early Monday after being tracked down by bloodhounds on a woody

Back Page Col. 6

From Page 1

hillside about five miles northeast of this little village.

Shelton, 32, a native of Kingsport, who is serving 65 years for murder, assault and larceny, was taken in the same general area yesterday morning after he jumped into a truck, scared off its driver, then skidded the truck into a ditch while trying to flee pursuing patrols. Neither Shelton nor the truck's driver, Larry Joe Phillips, was hurt.

A prison guard, who had been advised by walkie-talkie that a van had been stolen and was heading into the area, looked up in time to see the vehicle plunge off the roadway.

"I walked over and I asked Shelton to get out and come up the bank," the guard said, "but he said he was too tired and didn't think he could make it up. . . . So I went down and put handcuffs on him and helped him up the bank."

None of the escapers ever got more than 20 miles from the 440-inmate prison after using a homemade pipe ladder to scale a wall. They could not elude the brambled Cumberland hills, the braces of relentless bloodhounds, the whirling helicopters and the scores of patrols and roadblocks.

For that matter, no convict has ever successfully escaped from the prison in the eight years since it became a "maximum security" facility in the Tennessee penitentiary system.

Warden Lane disclosed yesterday that Ray had in his possession when captured \$290 in cash and a four-inch-square scrap of a road map that covered a 40-mile section of the Brushy Mountain area.

Lane said the relatively small amount of money Ray had with him "makes us believe he did not have outside help. That assures us he was not going to buy his way out."

Lane said Ray had been earning \$35 a month working in the prison laundry and that he "apparently has been hiding money for some time."

Ray's lawyer, Jack Kershaw of Nashville, visited his client yesterday morning and later told newsmen that although he long had argued that the King killing involved a conspiracy, he had concluded that the Brushy Mountain breakout was planned and executed from within.

"I think James Earl regrets his caper," Kershaw added.

Kershaw said he would continue his running effort to get a new trial for Ray and would fight a request by Governor Ray Blanton that Ray be transferred to a federal prison.

Kershaw said that Ray had committed no federal crime and therefore could not be transferred to a federal prison. He called the governor's request "ridiculous."

Kershaw also said yesterday that Ray had agreed to talk "in a few days" with members of the House Assassinations Committee. The committee is investigating the King slaying and the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Kershaw also said he will file a petition within the next 60 days asking for a new trial for his client.

Ray contends he was pressured into a guilty plea by officials and Percy Foreman, his lawyer at the time. He says he was in Memphis and purchased the rifle that killed King at the direction of a mysterious man whom he knew only as Raoul. Until he heard radio news reports, Ray says, he did not know of King's death.

Kershaw said yesterday that he had obtained a picture of Raoul, about ten days ago through what he called a combination of luck and "investigative brilliance." But he said he would not make the picture public now.

New York Times