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★ Ray's Hope Dimmed

James Earl Ray, the slayer of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., has bungled another attempt to escape from prison, authorities say.

Tennessee State Corrections Commissioner Clark Luttrell said 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.

The warden said that even if Ray had been successful in his attempt to saw his way through the ceiling, he would have faced several more obstacles. He would have had to punch a hole through the roof of the building, then there is a 40-foot drop to the ground that would have deposited him within feet of a guard tower.—UPI



James Earl Ray

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