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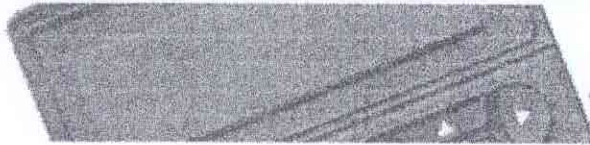
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March 26, 1998, Thursday
Section: National Desk

Agent's Account in King Slaying Is a 'Fabrication,' the F.B.I. Says

A former F.B.I. agent's contention that he found evidence supporting James Earl Ray's claim of a frame-up in the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is a "total fabrication," a spokesman for the Federal Bureau of Investigation said today.

The former agent, **Donald Wilson**, maintained at a news conference in Atlanta on Tuesday that he discovered the evidence -- two slips of paper -- in an F.B.I. search of Mr. Ray's car on April 10, 1968, six days after Dr. King had been killed by a sniper here in Memphis.

F.B.I. records, however, show that five agents searched the car and that Mr. **Wilson** was not among them, the bureau's spokesman, Frank Scafidi, said from headquarters in Washington.

"He is alleging something that as far as we're concerned is a total fabrication," Mr. Scafidi said.

A former agent who did search the car supported Mr. Scafidi's account. That onetime agent, Carl E. Claiborne, said from his home in Knoxville, Tenn., that he did not know Mr. **Wilson** and that "he wasn't there" during the search, in the basement of the bureau's office in Atlanta, the city where the car, a white Ford Mustang, was found in a housing development after the assassination.

Mr. **Wilson** spoke little at the Atlanta news conference on Tuesday, where most of the talking was done by Mr. Ray's lawyer, William F. Pepper. Neither man said why Mr. **Wilson** had waited 30 years to come forward.

Mr. Pepper said both slips of paper taken from Mr. Ray's car had the name "Raul" written on them and that one detailed what Mr. Pepper described as "a laundry list of payments to other people and other entities."

Mr. Ray has argued for 30 years that he was set up to take the blame for the murder by an underworld figure he knew only as Raul.

But no evidence of Raul's existence has ever been found by prosecutors.

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Federal Bureau of Investigation

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