

Introduction

When the history of the ARRB is written, I am confident that this conference will receive special mention. I remember chatting with Paul Hoch at the COPA conference last Fall, when he mentioned the HSCA "critics conference" that he had attended. The idea of holding a conference of recognized experts had a great deal of appeal. We grappled with a number of different ideas of how to structure this event, and thanks to the vision and hard work of my colleagues, principally Jeremy Gunn, we settled on today's format and guest list. When I spoke to Paul seven months ago, I was the only staff member of the ARRB, these offices were still a figment of GSA's imagination, and the task ahead of us seemed an ill-defined, "mission impossible."

We have come a long way. Our staff, now nearly complete, numbers twenty-three, and has the right mix of intelligence, experience, confidence, sense of adventure purpose, and good humor. Our offices are outfitted, and our task, although no less daunting, has developed contour and texture.

We thank you for taking time from your hectic schedules to come to Washington to join us. We could easily have met with you individually, but we hoped that, in coming together, you, as a group, could provide more than you as individuals could do alone.

Goals

We hope that we have selected the right mixture of personalities and perspectives and that we can provide the appropriate catalyst to spark a stimulating, productive, and rewarding discussion. As Jeremy Gunn has written in the introduction to our conference agenda, we are not here to grind axes or to represent theories. We are here in the pursuit of records that will help us fulfill our mandate of collecting and making available the most complete historical record possible of the assassination of President Kennedy.

Gracious Living

I know that it is not necessary, but allow me to be defensive for a moment about the constraints the Federal government places on our ability to be gracious hosts. We not only make you sing for your supper, but we make you pay for it as well. We wish it were different. If you have any questions about reimbursements or your honorarium (such as it is), please speak with Tracy.

Taping

We plan to record today's meeting.