

May 3, 1996

**BY FACSIMILE**

The Honorable William M. Thomas  
Chairman  
Committee on House Oversight  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1309 Longworth Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-6157

Re: Request for Permission to Hand-Carry Accompanied House Select Committee on  
Assassinations (HSCA) Records to FBI Headquarters

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Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to request your permission for the ARRB to hand-carry HSCA records to the FBI for their review.

As you are aware, the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) collection contains numerous records that the National Archives and Record Administration (NARA) has referred to originating agencies (primarily the FBI and CIA) for review for potential postponements under the John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act (JFK Act).

Under the direction and with the authorization of your Committee, NARA forwarded copies of most of these referred documents to the originating agencies back in 1993. Six boxes of records -- constituting the Security Classified Files record series within the HSCA collection -- were, inadvertently, not copied and forwarded in 1993. These referred records need to be processed by their originating agencies under the JFK Act.

In implementing the JFK Act, the FBI has to date focused primarily on processing its own core collection of assassination-related records. The ARRB has established a good working relationship with the Bureau in this effort. Building on this success, we would like to encourage the Bureau to begin the large-scale processing of HSCA referred records.

Toward that end, it would greatly assist both the Bureau and the ARRB if you would grant permission for the records to be reviewed by the FBI at their headquarters.

As the temporary physical custodians of these records, ARRB staff would be with the records at all times, transporting them to the FBI for review and returning them to the ARRB at the end of each day. Transport to and from FBI Headquarters would be carried out in full compliance with established procedures for the movement of classified documents. The ARRB would ensure that the physical handling of the documents by Bureau personnel fully conforms with the guidelines you suggested, and we agreed to, when we took temporary physical custody of the records last year.

As you know, the statutory authorization for our agency will expire on September 30, 1997. While we made a great deal of progress in the past year, a great deal more work remains to be done. Accordingly, we wish to avail ourselves of every opportunity to facilitate the review of HSCA records by originating agencies as required under the JFK Act. The FBI has informed us that these procedures would enable them to move much more quickly in this process, and so we ask your permission to proceed along the lines laid out above.

Finally, we have informally communicated our intentions on this matter to the staff of the Center for Legislative Archives. While they advised us to contact you directly, our understanding is that they have no objection to our proposal and that, in fact, they have employed similar procedures in the past when the records in question were in their custody.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. Please feel free to have your staff contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

David G. Marwell  
Executive Director

cc - Michael Gillette