



The White House Situation Room, Rebuilt In Dallas

By [LAUREN SILVERMAN](#) · APR 22, 2013



The Situation Room has been reconstructed at the George W. Bush Presidential Center.
DANE WALTERS

This is the second installment in the KERA News series "Inside the Bush Center."

It's one of the most mysterious rooms in the White House: The Situation Room. And the public has almost never seen it, save for a couple of snapshots from the mission that killed Osama Bin Laden. Now, that iconic

room has been rebuilt in Dallas -- inside the new George W. Bush Presidential Center, which will be dedicated Thursday.

The Nerve Center

President John F. Kennedy came up with the idea for the original Situation Room. Frustrated by a lack of communication during the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, he asked his national security advisor, McGeorge Bundy, to create the communications center. It was originally carved out of a small area in the basement of the West Wing.

Although every president since Kennedy has used the Situation Room, it wasn't until President George W. Bush that the 5,000-square-foot complex got a complete renovation. Alan Lowe, the director of the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, says that before a [renovation in 2006](#), President Bush asked that the complex of rooms known as the Situation Room be saved for his museum.

"So we've reconstructed the conference room [in Dallas] and the other room we received, called the Command Room, is now at the Reagan library where they've reconstructed it," Lowe says.

The Situation Room As Classroom

The idea is to use the Situation Room as a classroom for middle and high school students to learn about the decision-making process usually kept behind closed doors. The museum will use technology to connect the room in Dallas with the room at the Reagan Library in Simi Valley, Calif., to reenact real world events. Lowe says the first scenarios students will play out are 9/11 and the attempted assassination of Ronald Reagan.

There's e a large flat screen on one of the walls, and students will have handheld devices providing instant updates. Keep in mind; none of those

gadgets were there when Bush was president. But Lowe says that technology is key to reaching the younger generation.

Trying to get kids interested in history is no new goal for presidential libraries. And neither is replicating rooms in the White House. In fact, the [Truman](#), [Johnson](#), [Ford](#), [Carter](#), [Reagan](#) and [Clinton](#) libraries all have full-scale models of the Oval Office -- but none has the Situation Room.

TAGS:

GEORGE W. BUSH

SITUATION ROOM

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