

WAITING WOULD HAVE INCREASED DANGER, POLICE SAY \ CHIEFS DEFEND ALTERATION FROM POLICY

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Tuesday, October 18, 1988

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Although Detroit Police Department policy says the preferred response in barricaded gunman situations is for officers to wait it out, top police officials made the decision Monday to rush **Charles Knowles** ' apartment because they thought waiting would only increase the danger to the community.

During the seven-hour standoff, two officers were slain by **Knowles** , who was killed in an exchange of gunfire with the police special response team.

Among the reasons cited by the officials were that **Knowles** had poured gasoline throughout the building, children were about to be released from nearby schools and dozens of families had been uprooted in the evacuation from the neighborhood.

"Our basic policy is to wait it out, but that's dependent on a lot of different factors, among them an apparent continuing danger to the community, other police officers, whether there's a hostage, the time of day, the community and so on," Executive Deputy Chief James Bannon said.

"The policy's there in principle to say, if at all possible, we prefer to wait. But our best decision in this case was that that was not a viable option, based on an assessment of our police execs, including myself, that the danger to the community, the neighborhood and other police officers was not lessening, but probably accelerating," Bannon said.

But some lower-ranking officers, who were not involved in the decision, said they were angry and bitter about the decision.

"I find it curious that they were all concerned about the gasoline, because they threw stun grenades in there," said one veteran officer who has been involved in numerous barricaded gunman situations. "Stun grenades are designed to create a very loud noise and very bright flash to disorient."

The officer, who spoke only on the condition of anonymity, said he was not sure whether stun grenades would necessarily ignite any gasoline.

Another factor that weighed heavily in the decision to enter the apartment, Bannon said, was that **Knowles** , from his second- floor apartment, could have hit people a long distance away using the high-powered rifle with which he was armed.

"No one -- not family, friends, acquaintances or medical personnel -- could give us any alternative . . . that would've allowed us to protect the community, because of the physical layout, pure and simple," he said.

Bannon said doctors who had treated **Knowles** said they could not assist police "because he was an absolute, total paranoid schizophrenic, and they had no recommendations for who could communicate with him."

A major factor "involved in the 'waiting it out' philosophy is you must have some type of dialogue going. And we didn't.

"We asked him if he wanted a member of the clergy, and that sent him into a tirade. We asked him if he'd talk with one of his relatives, and that sent him into another tirade. Then he stopped talking at all," Bannon said.

CUTLINE

Police brought an armored vehicle to help get **Charles Knowles** out of his east side apartment Monday. **Knowles**, a man with a history of mental problems, shot and killed two officers at the apartment on Springle Avenue.

Caption: Photo JOHN COLLIER

Memo: SPRINGLE AVENUE STANDOFF

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 13A;

Index Terms: SHOOTING ; HOMICIDE ; VICTIM ; MULTIPLE ; POLICE ; DETROIT ; CHARLES; KNOWLES

Record Number: 8802150461

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