

# INFORMATION LACK CITED IN BOMBING

## Top Philadelphia Officials Say They Lost Touch in Assault on Radical Group Move

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Special to The New York Times

PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 19 — Approaching the Baltimore Tunnel on his way home after a weekend visit with his parents in Virginia, the city's Managing Director, Leo A. Brooks, heard a radio news report: The police were evacuating a middle-class neighborhood in Philadelphia.

That was how Mr. Brooks, the second-ranking city official, learned that the police had begun their operation in May to arrest five members of the radical group Move, who had barricaded themselves in their fortified house in the neighborhood.

Mr. Brooks was not the only senior official out of contact in the police confrontation with Move, according to testimony this week before a panel appointed by Mayor W. Wilson Goode to determine how the crisis ended with the destruction of a neighborhood.

### Officials Out of Contact

Senior city officials, from the Mayor to the Police Commissioner, testified that they were out of contact at key moments and did not know what was happening in the siege, whose climax came when the police, in a helicopter, dropped a bomb on the roof of the Move group's house. In the ensuing fire, 61 row houses were destroyed, leaving 250 people homeless. Eleven people were found dead in the Move house.

In testimony this week, the city's most senior officials told the commission one after another that they first heard of subordinates' decisions and actions on television and radio. When they tried to reach those subordinates, they were frequently unsuccessful.

Mayor Goode, for instance, testified that he watched the fire on television in his office. He said he thought the Fire Department was pumping water on the blaze. After awhile, he said he realized that what he thought was spray from fire hoses was, in fact, "snow," or electronic interference.

### 'First Order of the Day'

When he realized his mistake, he said, he called Mr. Brooks. "I gave my first order of the day — put the fire out," the Mayor told the panel.

Mr. Brooks said he tried to relay the order to Police Commissioner Gregore J. Sambor but failed five times to reach him on the radio. Mr. Brooks said he became so frustrated that he walked five blocks from the police command center, in a geriatric home, to the scene of the siege, where he said he literally bumped into Mr. Sambor.

"What we have here is a lot of separate departments not communicating very well with each other and no one speaking out," a commission member, Bruce W. Kauffman, said to Mr. Sambor, speaking rhetorically.

"I would have greater field communications," said Mr. Sambor, who asserted that he was "not satisfied" with the police performance in the assault.

Mr. Sambor and Fire Commissioner William C. Richmond, who were on the site of the siege, had decided to allow the fire on the roof to burn and destroy a steel-reinforced bunker, Mr. Sambor testified. Mr. Sambor said he wanted to deprive Move members of a perch from which to shoot at the police and to have a hole through which to fire tear gas. By the time Mr. Brooks made his way to the siege site to order Mr. Sambor to fight the fire, the blaze could not be stopped, according to Mr. Sambor.

When firefighters tried to extinguish the flames, they were fired upon from the Move house, Mr. Sambor testified.

Mr. Goode testified that his subordinates, including Mr. Sambor and Mr. Brooks, failed to inform him of key details of the assault plan. He said, for instance, that he was not told that the police planned to use explosives at the start of their attack in an attempt to punch holes in the side walls of the Move house. That plan, which failed, called for police to fire tear gas into the house through the holes, driving out its occupants.

"Knowing what I know now, I certainly would be more of a hands-on kind of person," the Mayor testified. "I certainly would have more specific questions."

Mr. Goode testified that he did approve major parts of the plan, including the dropping of the bomb, but said he had too few details to make informed decisions.

Mr. Brooks and Mr. Sambor both disputed Mr. Goode's testimony, saying they had informed the Mayor of all the major decisions.

### Police Lacked Written Plan

Communications between top city officials were hampered, testimony showed, by the fact that the police did not have a written assault plan, and the Mayor never issued written instructions for an assault against Move.

Mr. Brooks, who resigned shortly after the confrontation, testified he recently stumbled across the only written record of the assault plan while doing his laundry. In a trouser pocket, he found a three-by-five-inch file card with notes he took in a briefing by Mr. Sambor, eight hours before the first shot was fired. Mr. Brooks testified that he used the notes to explain details of the plan to the Mayor.

But other senior city officials did not learn of the assault until the police erected barricades in the neighborhood, according to testimony. Alarmed at the police activity around her house, for instance, the Mayor's chief of staff, Shirley Hamilton, who lives a few blocks from the Move house, called Clarence Mosley, who as assistant Managing Director was in charge of the city day-to-day activities in Mr. Brooks's absence.

"Clarence," Mrs. Hamilton said. "What's going on in my neighborhood?"

"I don't know," Mr. Mosley told the commission he responded.