

Pastor's Son Disarms Radical Islamists on Train

The Rev. Tony Sadler, whose son Anthony was one of three Sacramento friends who subdued a gunman on a high-speed train bound for Paris, was sitting in a Sacramento barber's chair last Friday when his phone buzzed from an unfamiliar number.

He ignored it. There followed two text messages in quick succession.

"Dad," they read, Sadler said on Wednesday, "pick up the phone."

"Dad," his son said when they finally connected. "We're all right. But something has happened."

Anthony Sadler, 22, Spencer Stone, a 23-year-old U.S. airman, and National Guardsman Alek Skarlatos, 22, were touring Europe, partly to celebrate Skarlatos' return from a tour of duty in Afghanistan. Traveling to Paris on the bullet train on Friday, they saw the man, who was armed with a box cutter, a pistol and a Kalashnikov AK-47 assault rifle.

When they saw him cocking the rifle in what authorities have said was a planned attack by an Islamist militant, the men reacted quickly, subduing and disarming him.

Anthony Sadler, the first of the three childhood friends to return to Sacramento, appeared briefly at a news conference with his father, a well-known local Baptist pastor, and Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson.

"On behalf of the city and this region, we just want to say: 'Thank you, thank you and thank you,'" Johnson said, prompting one of four standing ovations among city employees, church members and others gathered in 100-degree (38-C) heat outside

City Hall.

The younger Sadler, who was interviewed by security agencies from France as well as the United States and received the French Legion d'honneur after the incident, stood quietly beside the mayor, a former basketball star.

He said he was overwhelmed by all the attention.

"This is my home, and I'm just glad to be back here," he said. "I didn't expect all of this to happen."

Sacramento has been abuzz over its hometown heroes since the news broke over the weekend that the Americans who took down the gunman who grew up in the area.

On Wednesday, Johnson promised a citywide celebration when all three of the men have returned. He produced a Sacramento Kings basketball jersey with "Sadler" written on the back.

"We're going to have a parade that's fit for some Kings," he said.

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