

# in shooter's building

## Revelation adds to questions about Trump's security

The Washington Post

Local police who were assigned by the Secret Service to help spot threats in the crowd at Donald Trump's rally Saturday were inside the building where a gunman had positioned himself on the roof to shoot at the former president, according to a Secret Service official briefed on the incident.

From inside the Agr International building, they spotted a man, later identified as 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks, acting furtively, walking back and forth around the building with some gear, and radioed a



Thomas Matthew Crooks

Secret Service command post to alert them, the official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the ongoing investigation.

The revelations add to the growing list of questions about the Secret Service's plan for securing areas outside the perime-

ter and about the failure of law enforcement to act quickly enough on multiple early warnings of suspicious activity. The Washington Post reported in a video analysis that bystanders at the Trump rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, warned local police that they had seen a man clambering onto the roof of the building. A video posted to social media shows one man shouting, "Officer! Officer!" as others point toward the building. "He's on the roof!" a woman says.

The account from a Secret Service official also underscores emerging tensions between that agency and local authorities over who is to blame for the fact that the gunman was able to access a clear view of the event. The Secret Service was responsible for the overall security plan, but the agency has said it relied on

local law enforcement in areas outside the security perimeter. The Agr building was not inside the perimeter, which required members of the public to pass through a metal detector before entering.

The Secret Service official said the sniper team inside the building was from Beaver County, which neighbors Butler County, where Saturday's rally took place. Local authorities said it was common for SWAT teams in nearby counties to supplement security for large events.

The Beaver County district attorney's office confirmed that a SWAT team from the county was at Saturday's rally but declined to release additional information, pointing to ongoing investigations by state and federal authorities. In a written statement Tuesday, the county dis-

trict attorney's office said, "We are proud of the heroic actions taken by our officers."

Richard Goldinger, the Butler County district attorney, said in an interview that the SWAT teams from his jurisdiction were all inside the secure perimeter. "Secret Service was in charge, and so it was their responsibility to make sure that the venue and the surrounding area was secure," he told The Post. "That's common sense, I think. That's their job."

The Beaver Countian reported that counter-snipers were inside the building beyond the security perimeter for the event. The outlet reported that a Beaver County police officer warned a command center that he had seen a man with a range finder — a device the helps estimate distances — before gunfire erupted.

# Talking to kids about assassination attempt

BY DANDAN ZOU

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Addilynn Akridge, 17, was in shock when she watched a news video her parents sent Saturday about the attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump.

She was at work at a bakery in her hometown of Huntington, and when she got home, she discussed it with her parents. They talked about gun control, which the teen and her father, Daniel Akridge, disagreed over how to address. But they agreed that violence was never acceptable.

"It's OK to disagree with other people," Daniel Akridge said. "What's not OK is to resort to violence."

The shooting at a Pennsylvania rally has left Addilynn uneasy. It reminded her of an active-shooter scare she endured when she was a second grader in Utah.

She's concerned over what will happen next. And it reinforced her worry over safety in public spaces as part of a generation that grew up "in a post-Columbine, post-Parkland world," she said, referring to the two mass school shootings.

"In schools, we did drills so



Daniel Akridge and his 17-year-old daughter, Addilynn Akridge, agree to keep open minds despite differing political views.

often," Addilynn said. "I still can't go into a place and not [know] where I can hide."

After the attack on Trump, which injured him and two bystanders and killed another man, parents like Daniel are faced with fresh questions such as Addilynn's over public safety and tensions over disagreements in a volatile political climate.

"Talking to children about threatening events in the world is a balancing act," said Kristin Bernard, an associate professor of psychology at Stony Brook University. "It's important to be reassuring yet open, which

is hard to do sometimes when it's an event that's also affecting us adults in an emotional way."

While they hold different political views, Daniel Akridge, a moderate conservative, and his daughter, a Democrat, agreed on keeping an open mind.

"He always said: 'While I may not agree with you, I will always hear you out,'" Addilynn said.

Here is some advice from education experts and child psychiatrists over how to navigate conversations with children about the assassination attempt and what's to come next.

## What might kids be worried about?

In the aftermath of the shooting, children may have layers of worries, from anxiety over election outcomes to general concerns over safety in public spaces, experts said.

Dr. Scott Krakower, a child psychiatrist with Northwell Health, said parents can suggest their children reframe their thinking. For example, if a child asks how safe it is to attend a public event, the adults could offer the very low statistical likelihood that something like a shooting could happen.

## How do you speak to children about what happened?

Alan Singer, a Hofstra University professor of education, suggested letting kids ask questions, which could guide parents on what information to provide.

"You want to find out what they would like to know before you make assumptions," Singer said.

Bernard said older children may want to explore the subject in a deeper way.

"It's really important that parents are opening up those conversations, and also, as much as possible, letting teens lead those

conversations so parents aren't imposing their own political views or assuming their kids know things that they don't," she said.

With younger children, Bernard suggested parents communicate to them that they are safe and share age-appropriate information.

## What else can parents do?

Krakower said social media can be good to heighten awareness, but parents should consider limiting their children's time on the platforms.

"The problem is that social media is so catered towards what's happening, and now you're just going to keep seeing one clip of someone getting shot over and over again," he said. "You need to make sure your kids got a break."

Bernard said parents should at least monitor, if not limit, their child's exposure to media as well.

"What you see on a news program or what you hear on the radio while driving in the car can also share the information in a way that's not . . . developmentally tailored to what's appropriate for kids of different ages," she said.