

Shots 'impossible' to take in

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A WOMAN who encountered Tyler Cassidy within 10 minutes of his being shot dead said she found it **"impossible" to comprehend trained police "would shoot a little boy with knives"**.

"I'm not from Australia, I'm Canadian and in Canada I just couldn't imagine that even being possible." Kimberly Model told an inquest yesterday.

"I had never heard of a story like that - and from the encounter that we had with the boy, it just seemed so impossible."

She was walking her dog with a friend at the Northcote Plaza when she briefly met a "skinny" teenager holding two kitchen knives outside a bottleshop.

She became unnerved when he stopped to greet her dog, Chewie, and then said: *"You better watch out, your dog likes crazy people."*

Ms Model said the behaviour was strange, but she had not felt threatened. Not long after, she heard a volley of shots from a nearby skate park. While her friend speculated the boy could have been shot, Ms Model had dismissed the idea.

Tyler, 15, died on December 11, 2008 after confronting police with two knives at the park. **Mental health worker Jill Birney had been inside the bottleshop** when she saw a teenager approach the counter with two knives, blades pointed up.

She said the boy twice asked that the staff *"call the cops"*. *"The threat of violence seemed quite real and quite imminent."*

Later, **after speaking with friends, Ms Birney concluded the boy had been asking for help:**

"I thought he wanted attention."