

Tyler shooting was like an execution, witness says

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AT 15, Tyler Cassidy could not have apprehended the gravity of the situation when he confronted armed police, according to a passer-by who witnessed the incident and has drawn comparisons with the shooting being "*...like an execution*".

Daniel Holden who saw a policeman spray the teenager with capsicum and also demand that he "*...put the knife down, or I will shoot you...*", said at that point he also wanted to scream at a defiant Tyler to lay down his weapon.

After Tyler was sprayed, he also heard him say something "*...so horrible...*" that it was "*...almost a martyr call...*". He said, "***That would be right, shot by the police'***."

Mr Holden, who retreated from his viewing position after the spraying incident, also described subsequently hearing a shot being fired, followed by a "*cluster*" of shots.

"It terrified me when I heard so many shots, because it was one man [Tyler] with a knife," he said in a statement presented at the Coroners Court yesterday.

Asked to explain the comment by Fiona Ellis, counsel assisting the coroner, he said:

"If they [police] weren't shooting wildly and they were shooting at someone, then they had intent to kill ... it was like an execution."

He also confirmed in evidence that he observed only one knife in Tyler's hand and only saw two police at the scene. The inquest has heard that four police were involved in confronting Tyler who was threatening to kill and was armed with two stolen knives on the night of December 11, 2008.

Senior Constable Leemara Fairgrieve, who arrived as part of a back-up team, said when she got there she heard one of the officers involved, Sergeant Colin Dods, yell:

"Show me your hands."

She then saw a male with a shaved head lying on his back.

When asked by another officer about what happened, she heard Sergeant Dods reply:

"We foamed him twice, it was ineffective. He [was] screaming to be shot. He had two knives and he ran at us. I fired a warning shot and he kept coming at us."

Three officers - Sergeant Dods, Senior Constable Richard Blundell and Senior Constable Nicole De Propertis had confirmed they had fired their guns, she said.

A fourth officer, Senior Constable Antonia Ferrante, had said:

"I didn't shoot because Dodsey was too close."