

Family wants damages for dog killed by cop

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A Vallejo family filed a legal claim against the city Wednesday, alleging that a police officer wrongfully shot and killed one of the family dogs.

Police have failed to accept responsibility for the May 16 shooting, which occurred "during an unannounced, non-emergency visit" by Officer Chase Calhoun, according to the claim, a legally required precursor to a lawsuit.

The claim seeks an unspecified amount in damages.

The city has not responded to the claim, but police have said Calhoun had no choice but to shoot when the family's two dogs charged him at the home near the corner of Kentucky and Trinity streets.

The incident began when Calhoun went to Erika Gregory's home to investigate her report of identity theft, police said.

There were no dogs present when Calhoun approached the front yard gate, authorities said. But as the officer opened the gate, two dogs came around the corner and "started snarling" and moving toward him, prompting him to fire two rounds, police said. One of the dogs, Belle, an 11-year-old Labrador mix, died on the spot. The other dog, Flicka, a 14-year-old Australian shepherd mix, was not hurt.

Gregory said police had never told her that an officer was coming to take the report, and that she would have kept the dogs inside had she known. She said the dogs were friendly with visitors they knew.

Nick Casper, Gregory's attorney, said Wednesday that the shooting was "flagrantly unreasonable."

The incident traumatized the family and led them to move to Marin County, according to the claim said.

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