

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
For the Northern District of California

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
Northern District of California  
San Francisco Division

CHIEN VAN BUI, et al.,

No. C 11-04189 LB

Plaintiffs,

**AMENDED<sup>1</sup> ORDER GRANTING IN PART AND DENYING IN PART DEFENDANTS' MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT**

v.

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO, et al.,

[Re: ECF No. 81]

Defendants.

**INTRODUCTION**

In this civil rights action, Chien Van Bui and Ai Huynh (collectively, "Plaintiffs"), the parents of decedent Vinh Van Bui, known as Tony Bui ("Bui"), sued San Francisco Police Officers Austin Wilson ("Officer Wilson") and Timothy Ortiz ("Officer Ortiz"), and the City and County of San Francisco ("CCSF") (collectively, "Defendants") for the death of their son. Complaint, ECF No. 1.<sup>2</sup> Defendants move for summary judgment. Motion, ECF No. 81. The court held a hearing on the

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<sup>1</sup> The court issues this amended order primarily to clarify certain citations to the record, the evidence the court considered when making its decisions, and the court's reasoning regarding its denial of qualified immunity.

<sup>2</sup> Citations are to the Electronic Case File ("ECF") with pin cites to the electronically-generated page numbers at the top of the document.

1 matter on June 26, 2014. 6/26/2014 Minute Order, ECF No. 136. Upon consideration of the  
2 admissible evidence submitted, the arguments of counsel, and the applicable authority, the court  
3 **GRANTS** summary judgment in favor of Defendants with respect to Plaintiffs' *Monell* claim and  
4 otherwise **DENIES** Defendants' motion.

5 **STATEMENT**

6 **I. FACTS**

7 Defendants Austin Wilson ("Officer Wilson") and Timothy Ortiz ("Officer Ortiz") were police  
8 officers with the San Francisco Police Department ("SFPD") and employed by the City and County  
9 of San Francisco ("City"). Joint Statement of Undisputed Facts ("UF"), Fact 1. At all times  
10 relevant to this action, they were acting in the course and scope of their employment with the SFPD.  
11 UF, Fact 1.

12 On December 29, 2010, Officer Wilson and Officer Ortiz were in uniform and driving a marked  
13 police car. UF, Fact 1. Officer Wilson was 6' tall and weighed 198 pounds, Wilson Depo. 2 at  
14 69:18-70:1, Schwartz Decl., Ex. Q, ECF No. 121-17, and Officer Ortiz was 5'9" tall and weighed  
15 between 175 and 185 pounds, Ortiz Depo. 2 at 104:19-22, Schwartz Decl., Ex. L, ECF No. 121-12.  
16 Police Inspector Kevin Whitfield, who is not a defendant to this action, also was working that day.  
17 UF, Fact 1. Vinh Van Bui, known as Tony Bui ("Bui"), lived at 629 Bacon Street, San Francisco, a  
18 flat which he shared with several family members, including his sisters Cindy Thanh Tran ("Tran")  
19 and Lan Herrera ("Herrera"), Herrera's daughter Melina H., his father Plaintiff Chien Van Bui  
20 ("Chien Van Bui") and his mother Plaintiff Ai Huynh ("Huynh"). UF, Fact 2. Bui, who was 46  
21 years old and was 5'6" tall and weighed 135 pounds, suffered from a mental condition and was  
22 easily agitated by loud noises. UF, Fact 4; Marvin C. Depo. at 20:16-22, Schwartz Decl., Ex. B,  
23 ECF No. 121-2; Autopsy Report, Schwartz Decl., Ex. CC, ECF No. 121-29 at 2. Specifically, Bui  
24 had suffered from schizophrenia since at least 1995, Chien Van Bui Depo. at 42:9-25, Schwartz  
25 Decl., Ex. A, ECF No. 121-1; Medical Records at 87-89, Schwartz Decl., Ex. AA, ECF No. 121-27,  
26 and since 1997, as a side effect of his antipsychotic medication, he also suffered from tardive  
27 dyskinesia (i.e. "late-onset abnormal movement"), Shyn Depo. at 33:20-34:17, 38:21-39:7, Schwartz  
28 Decl., Ex. N, ECF No. 121-14; Medical Records at 282, Schwartz Decl., Ex. AA, ECF No. 121-27,

1 which sometimes caused his trunk and extremities to rock involuntarily and also caused him to  
2 sometimes walk slowly, one step at a time, Marvin C. Depo. at 75:23-77:12, Schwartz Decl., Ex. B,  
3 ECF No. 121-2; Shyn Depo. at 33:20-34:17, 34:21-36:1, 38:21-39:7, 51:14-53:16, 57:14-20,  
4 Schwartz Decl., Ex. N, ECF No. 121-14; Tran Depo. at 21:110, 24:22-25:14, 34:24-35:4, Schwartz  
5 Decl., Ex. O, ECF No. 121-15. Bui did not have a criminal record. Tran Decl. ¶ 4, ECF No. 104.

6 On the afternoon of December 29, 2010, Melina H., who was then 15 years old, had  
7 approximately 15 of her teenaged friends over at her home at 629 Bacon Street. UF, Fact 3. Sharon  
8 H. was one of these friends. UF, Fact 3. At some point in time, Sharon H. entered the bathroom and  
9 slammed the door behind her, which startled and agitated Bui. UF, Fact 4; Sharon H. Depo. at 20:3-  
10 6, Schwartz Decl., Ex. I, ECF No. 121-9. When Sharon H. came out of the bathroom and was going  
11 to the kitchen, Bui stuck her in the lower back with an X-Acto knife, which had a blade that was  
12 approximately 1 inch long. UF, Fact 5; Sharon H. Depo. at 25:6-26:16, 72:20-73:18, Connolly  
13 Decl., Ex. N, ECF No. 91; Wilson Depo. at 70:13-17, Schwartz Decl., Ex. Q, ECF No. 121-17;  
14 Wilson Decl., Ex. A (photograph of the X-Acto knife). The other teenagers told Sharon H. that she  
15 was bleeding and apparently injured. Sharon H. Depo. at 27:8-28:8, Connolly Decl., Ex. N, ECF No.  
16 91. Melina H. then telephoned her mother (Herrera), who was not at the house, and told her that  
17 “Tony [Bui] cut Sharon [H].” UF, Fact 6. Herrera told Melina H. to call “911.” UF, Fact 7. Melina  
18 H. called 911 and reported: “We have a man that’s like mental here and just slapped  
19 somebody—one of my friends, and yeah, we need him out.” UF, Fact 8.

20 911 Dispatch broadcasted to SFPD officers in the field that Bui had “just slapped [Melina H.’s]  
21 friend” and that the “reporting party” said Bui was “mentally challenged.” UF, Fact 9. Moments  
22 later, Melina H. clarified, telling the 911 operator the following: “[Bui] has like a mini, a little mini  
23 like knife thing. It’s sharp. And when [her friend] came out [of the bathroom], he said ‘Do you  
24 want me to stab you?’ and he hit her with the little pointy thing. . . . She’s bleeding. Yeah, he  
25 stabbed her.” UF, Fact 10. Based on this additional information, 911 Dispatch broadcasted:  
26 “Subject has a pointed object that he stuck the victim with in the back.” UF, Fact 11. 911 Dispatch  
27 also transmitted through the computer-assisted dispatch system that Bui had “stabbed [Melina H.’s]  
28 friend” and was “mentally challenged,” that Melina H. was “not sure if [Bui] has the knife,” and that

1 the injury was “minor.” UF, Fact 11; Borg Decl., Ex. J, ECF No. 94-10. 911 Dispatch also sent to  
2 the police vehicle computer the following text: “TX: Susp is Toni who is mentally challenged.”  
3 Wilson Depo. at 42:5-15, Schwartz Decl., Ex. Q, ECF No. 121-17. When responding to the  
4 dispatch, Officers Ortiz and Wilson had access to the dispatch information through a vehicle  
5 computer, working radios and, as to Officer Wilson, an earpiece, Ortiz Depo. at 32:22-25, 54:17-23,  
6 80:10-17, Schwartz Decl., Ex. L, ECF No. 121-12; Wilson Depo. at 32:12-19, Schwartz Decl., Ex.  
7 Q, ECF No. 121-17; Ortiz Decl. ¶ 10, ECF No. 82; Wilson Decl. ¶ 14, ECF No. 84, but Officers  
8 Ortiz and Wilson and Inspector Whitfield say they did not know at that time that Bui had mental  
9 health problems, Ortiz Decl. ¶ 10, ECF No. 82; Whitfield Decl. ¶ 14, ECF No. 83, Wilson Decl. ¶  
10 10, ECF No. 84.

11 At about 3:53 p.m., Officers Ortiz and Wilson arrived at 629 Bacon Street. UF, Fact 12.  
12 Inspector Whitfield also responded, arriving at 629 Bacon Street at about the same time as Officers  
13 Ortiz and Wilson. UF, Fact 13. The parties dispute whether the officers treated the call as an  
14 emergency. Plaintiffs say that the officers did not and provide evidence that the officers’ sirens and  
15 lights were off, the officers were not running, and the officers did not discuss tactics when  
16 approaching the flat. Ortiz Depo. at 45:13-20, 48:18-25, 55:11-14, Schwartz Decl., Ex. L, ECF No.  
17 121-12; Wilson Depo. at 55:19-21, 58:1-8, 66:25-68:24, Schwartz Decl., Ex. Q, ECF No. 121-17.  
18 Defendants, on the other hand, provide evidence that the 911 call was classified as an “A  
19 priority” call, giving it the highest priority, Goley Depo. at 17:20-18:14, Connolly Reply Decl., Ex.  
20 D, ECF No. 129-4 at 17:20-18:14; Borg Decl., Ex. B, ECF No. 94-2; Borg Decl., Ex. J, ECF No. 94-  
21 10, and that the officers responded, at least initially, to the call as a “Code 3”—with their lights and  
22 sirens on, Ortiz Decl. ¶ 2, ECF No. 82; Wilson Decl. ¶ 2, ECF No. 84. Their guns were holstered,  
23 Ortiz Decl. ¶ 8, ECF No. 82; Wilson Decl. ¶ 7, ECF No. 84, they had pepper spray and batons on  
24 their persons, and they also had an Extended Range Impact Weapon (“ERIW”)—a shotgun that  
25 shoots bean bags—in their car, Ortiz Depo. at 28:2-4, 46:4-12, Schwartz Decl., Ex. L, ECF No. 121-  
26 12; Wilson Depo. at 35:18-37:4, Schwartz Decl., Ex. Q, ECF No. 121-17.

27 The officers either knocked on the door or rang the doorbell, and one of the teenagers at Melina  
28 H.’s get-together, Aaron L., opened the door and allowed the officers into the house. UF, Fact 14.

1 Upon entering, Officers Ortiz and Wilson and Inspector Whitfield saw a group of teenagers in the  
2 living room, and at least one officer asked whether anyone had been stabbed. UF, Fact 15; UF, Fact  
3 16; Ortiz Decl. ¶¶ 4-6, ECF No. 82; Whitfield Decl. ¶ 4, ECF No. 83; Jason W. Depo. at 33:10-24,  
4 Connolly Decl., Ex. H, ECF No. 88; Sharon H. Depo. at 36:11-20, Connolly Decl., Ex. N, ECF No.  
5 91; Marvin C. Depo. at 40:24-41:9, 42:7-13, 73:20-24, Connolly Decl., Ex. J, ECF No. 89; Tran  
6 Depo. at 13:9-11; 14:10-15:17, Connolly Decl., Ex. P, ECF No. 92-1; Ortiz Depo. at 49:5-12,  
7 Schwartz Decl., Ex. L, ECF No. 121-12. Initially, no one in the room acknowledged that anyone  
8 had been stabbed, no one appeared to be in distress, and Bui’s sister, Tran, the only adult present,  
9 said nothing had happened. UF, Fact 16; Ortiz Decl. ¶ 5, ECF No. 82; Sharon H. Depo. at 39:1-6,  
10 Connolly Decl., Ex. N, ECF No. 91; Ortiz Depo. at 49:13-22, Schwartz Decl., Ex. L, ECF No. 121-  
11 12. Tran may also have told the police officers to leave. *See* Sharon H. Depo. at 39:3-40:2,  
12 Connolly Decl., Ex. N, ECF No. 91; Sharon H. Depo. at 66:11-16, Schwartz Decl., Ex. I, ECF No.  
13 121-9; Whitfield Depo. at 62:7-16, Schwartz Decl., Ex. P, ECF No. 121-16; Tran Decl. ¶ 2, ECF No.  
14 104; *but see* Tran Depo. at 14:2-17:15, 57:15-20, 58:20-23, Connolly Reply Decl., Ex. P, ECF No.  
15 129-16 at 14:2-17:15. No one had yet informed Tran that anyone had been stabbed, that Melina H.  
16 had called the police, or why Melina H. had done so. UF, Fact 19. Relying on the information that  
17 Tran provided to him (i.e., that nothing had happened), Officer Ortiz radioed Dispatch at 3:45:43  
18 p.m. and stated that the call had “no merit.” UF, Fact 17.

19       Thereafter, Inspector Whitfield again asked the group of teenagers if anyone had been “stabbed.”  
20 Whitfield Decl. ¶ 5, ECF No. 83. This time, Sharon H. was pointed out as having been cut, and she  
21 raised her hand in confirmation. UF, Fact 20. Inspector Whitfield asked Sharon H. where she had  
22 been stabbed, and she showed him the injury on her back, which Inspector Whitfield describes as a  
23 “puncture wound.” UF, Fact 21. Tran heard Inspector Whitfield confirm with Sharon H. that she  
24 had been stabbed. UF, Fact 22. Inspector Whitfield’s observation of the puncture wound confirmed  
25 that a stabbing or other such injury had occurred, but Sharon H. stated that she was not hurt and did  
26 not need a paramedic. Whitfield Decl. ¶¶ 5-6, ECF No. 83; Whitfield Depo. at 45:6-8, Schwartz  
27 Decl., Ex. P, ECF No. 121-16. Officers Ortiz and Wilson saw Sharon H. lift her shirt and point to  
28 her back, and Officer Ortiz saw a wound on her back, which looked to him like a fresh cut. Ortiz

1 Decl. ¶ 6, ECF No. 82; Wilson Decl. ¶ 6, ECF No. 84. Having confirmed that Sharon H. had been  
2 stabbed, Officers Ortiz and Wilson asked with urgency the location of the man with the knife. Ortiz  
3 Decl. ¶ 6, ECF No. 82; Whitfield Decl. ¶ 6, ECF No. 83; Wilson Decl. ¶ 6, ECF No. 84; Tran Depo.  
4 at 14:10-15:22, Connolly Decl., Ex. P, ECF No. 92-1; Marvin C. Depo. at 41:3-15, Connolly Decl.,  
5 Ex. J, ECF No. 89. Certain people in the house informed Officers Ortiz and Wilson that Bui was in  
6 the house, by either pointing down the hall or telling the officers. UF, Fact 25.

7 Hearing that a stabbing had occurred, seeing the wound, and hearing that the perpetrator was in  
8 the house corroborated for the officers that a crime had been committed and that the suspect was  
9 located on the premises. Ortiz Decl. ¶ 6, ECF No. 82; Whitfield Decl. ¶ 6, ECF No. 83; Wilson  
10 Decl. ¶ 6, ECF No. 84. The officers did not know at that time whether Bui still possessed the X-  
11 Acto Knife. Ortiz Depo. at 59:20-22, Schwartz Decl., Ex. L, ECF No. 121-12. As they advanced,  
12 Tran tried to inform the officers again of Bui's mental illness, and Plaintiffs say that the officers  
13 shoved her aside. Marvin C. Depo. at 70:25-71:20, Schwartz Decl., Ex. B, ECF No. 121-2; Melina  
14 H. Depo. at 69:6-12, 71:1-25, Schwartz Decl., Ex. H, ECF No. 121-8; Aaron L. Depo. at 21:13-17,  
15 21:25-22:2, 25:7-11, 39:14-19, Schwartz Decl., Ex. K, ECF No. 121-11; Simon P. Depo. at 26:2-9,  
16 26:24-27:19, 42:3-6, Schwartz Decl., Ex. M, ECF No. 121-13; Tran Depo. at 16:1-15, 17:7-15,  
17 55:2-9, Schwartz Decl., Ex. O, ECF No. 121-15; Sandra W. Depo. at 70:22-71:3, 76:15-20,  
18 Schwartz Decl., Ex. T, ECF No. 121-20; Tran Decl. ¶ 3, ECF No. 104. In any case, Officer Ortiz  
19 and Officer Wilson say that they do not recall Tran telling them that Bui was mentally ill. Ortiz  
20 Depo. at 54:17-55:8, 56:24-57:10, Schwartz Decl., Ex. L, ECF No. 121-12; *but see* Tran Depo. at  
21 16:7-10, 17:23-24, Schwartz Decl., Ex. O, ECF No. 121-15 (testifying that one of the officers told  
22 her that he knew Bui was mentally ill). Officers Ortiz and Wilson did not develop a plan to extract  
23 Bui from the bathroom. Ortiz Depo. at 55:11-14, Schwartz Decl., Ex. L, ECF No. 121-12; Wilson  
24 Depo. at 96:17-97:11, Schwartz Decl., Ex. Q, ECF No. 121-17.

25 Officers Ortiz and Wilson walked down the hallway toward the bathroom, looking for Bui. UF,  
26 Fact 26. Officers Ortiz knocked on the bathroom door and ordered Bui out. Ortiz Decl. ¶ 7, ECF  
27 No. 82; Melina H. Depo. at 75:18-24, Schwartz Decl., Ex. H, ECF No. 121-1; Sharon H. Depo. at  
28 38:6-23, 40:14-19, Schwartz Decl., Ex. I, ECF No. 121-9; Andrew K. Depo. at 32:24-33:4, Schwartz

1 Decl., Ex. J, ECF No. 121-10; Simon P. Depo. at 26:5-9, Schwartz Decl., Ex. M, ECF No. 121-13;  
2 Jason W. Depo. at 37:2-6, Schwartz Decl., Ex. R, ECF No. 121-18. Soon thereafter, the bathroom  
3 door opened inward, and Bui emerged with the X-Acto knife in his hand. UF, Fact 26; see Wilson  
4 Decl., Ex. A, ECF No. 84-1 (photographs of the X-Acto knife). Officers Ortiz and Wilson then  
5 pulled out their guns and pointed them at Bui. UF, Fact 28.

6 The parties agree about the following facts leading to Bui’s shooting. After the officers pulled  
7 out their guns and pointed them at Bui, they warned him to drop the knife. UF, Fact 29. Bui did not  
8 drop the knife. *Id.* Bui advanced down the hallway while Officers Ortiz and Wilson continued to  
9 order Bui to drop the knife. UF, Fact 30. The officers backed up somewhere in the living room. UF,  
10 Fact 31. Bui did not stop. UF, Fact 32. The officers shot three times at Bui. UF, Fact 33. Two of  
11 the shots hit Bui, who was injured fatally. UF, Fact 36.

12 The parties otherwise dispute much of what happened from the time that Bui opened the  
13 bathroom door to the moment he was shot. According to Plaintiffs, Bui had the X-Acto knife down  
14 by his side. Melina H. Depo. at 78:12-14 (“[Bui] started walking out really slowly. I saw the X-  
15 Acto knife; it was by his side.”), 79:9-11 (“[Bui] was walking very slowly, with his X-Acto knife by  
16 his side . . . .”), 79:22-25 (“[T]he police were backing up really fast, and [Bui] was, like, going  
17 extremely, like, slow, walking, and with the thing on his side . . . .”), Schwartz Decl., Ex. H, ECF  
18 No. 121-8; Tran Depo. at 21:11-22:1 (“And then he had his hand down. His hand never moved. He  
19 did not move his hand at all. He did not have any action that says he’s trying to provoke the  
20 police.”), 69:23-70:5 (“Q: Did it appear to you that [Bui] was pointing whatever it was that you saw  
21 in his hand toward the police officers? A: No. I don’t think he ha[d] any action to say that he’s  
22 trying to attack the police. Q: Was he pointing the object in his hand at the police officers or not?  
23 A: No, no. Never. I didn’t see.”), Schwartz Decl., Ex. O, ECF No. 121-15. Plaintiffs say that Bui,  
24 with the X-Acto knife still by his side, began to slowly shuffle down the hall and toward the officers  
25 and the front door of the flat. Marvin C. Depo. at 76:6-77:10 (Bui shuffled), Schwartz Decl., Ex. B,  
26 ECF No. 121-2; Melina H. Depo. at 78:4-81:7 (Bui walked extremely slowly down the hall and  
27 toward the officers and the front door, and he had the knife at his side), Schwartz Decl., Ex. H, ECF  
28 No. 121-8; Simon P. Depo. at 44:6-18 (Bui walked slowly toward the officers), 57:19-58:1 (Bui

1 advanced slowly toward the officers), Schwartz Decl., Ex. M, ECF No. 121-13; Tran Depo. at  
2 20:22-22:4 (Bui moved slowly), 62:11-20 (Bui walked very slowly out of the bathroom), 63:15-17  
3 (Bui walked very slowly toward the officers), 65:21-66:2 (Bui’s hands were straight at his sides as  
4 he walked down from the bathroom towards the living room), 69:17-70:5 (Bui did not point  
5 anything at the officers), Schwartz Decl., Ex. O, ECF No. 121-15. Plaintiffs further say that Bui did  
6 not threaten the police with the knife, but instead assumed a defensive, protective, cringing attitude  
7 where he turned away from the Officers and bent at the waist, keeping the hand with the knife at his  
8 side and bringing the other hand up with an open palm. Melina H. Depo. at 79:5-82:9 (Bui held  
9 knife at his side), Schwartz Decl., Ex. H, ECF No. 121-8; Aaron L. Depo. at 22:3-4 (Bui came out of  
10 the bathroom in a self-defense position), 23:21-25:5 (Bui crouched in self-defense position and had  
11 one hand open), 39:20-23 (Bui was not aggressive and was in a defense stance), Schwartz Decl., Ex.  
12 K, ECF No. 121-11; Simon P. Depo. at 57:19-58:1 (Bui advanced slowly), Schwartz Decl., Ex. M,  
13 ECF No. 121-13; Tran Depo. at 21:18-22:19 (Bui’s hands were down), 65:21-66:2 (same),  
14 69:17-70:5 (Bui never pointed anything at the officers), Schwartz Decl., Ex. O, ECF No. 121-15.  
15 The officers ordered that Bui drop the knife, but it appeared that he did not understand them. Sharon  
16 H. Depo. at 69:24-70:2 (Bui did not appear to understand the officers’ commands), Schwartz Decl.,  
17 Ex. I, ECF No. 121-9; Simon P. Depo. at 46:23-47:3 (same), Schwartz Decl., Ex. M, ECF No. 121-  
18 13; Tran Depo. at 20:20-23 (Bui could not hear what the officers were telling him), Schwartz Decl.,  
19 Ex. O, ECF No. 121-15; *but see* Sharon H. Depo. at 70:15-71:25 (does not actually know if Bui  
20 understood the officers’ commands), Schwartz Decl., Ex. I, ECF No. 121-9. The officers backed up  
21 to somewhere in the living room. UF, Fact 31. When approximately 6 to 8 feet away from Bui, the  
22 officers fatally shot Bui twice, with Officer Ortiz firing two shots (one of which missed Bui), and  
23 Officer Wilson firing one. UF, Fact 33; UF, Fact 34; Herrmann Decl. ¶¶ 3-13, ECF No. 103. The  
24 bullet from Officer Ortiz’s gun “passed primarily from [Bui’s] left to his right, downward at an  
25 angle of approximately 30 degrees and from the front of his body toward the back at an angle of  
26 approximately 30 degrees.” Herrmann Decl. ¶ 5, ECF No. 103. The bullet from Officer Wilson’s  
27 gun primarily passed through Bui “downward at an angle of approximately 55 degrees” and “was  
28 directed from [his] right to left at an angle of approximately 15 degrees and from front to back at an



1 angle of approximately 35 degrees.” Herrmann Decl. ¶ 6, ECF No. 103. “The shots were not fired  
2 with the officers and [Bui] facing each other in the erect position,” Herrmann Decl. ¶ 8, ECF No.  
3 103, Bui was turned away to his right from Officer Ortiz, Herrmann Decl. ¶ 10, ECF No. 103, and  
4 the bullets may have hit him at a downward angle either because he was shorter than the officers, he  
5 was falling from having been shot, or was cringing and trying to avoid being shot, Herrmann Decl.  
6 ¶¶ 9-13, ECF No. 103.

7 Defendants present a different story. They say that when Bui emerged from the bathroom, his  
8 hands were up near his chest and he walked towards Officers Ortiz and Wilson while waving the  
9 X-Acto knife in the air in an aggressive and menacing manner. Ortiz Decl. ¶ 7, ECF No. 82;  
10 Whitfield Decl., ¶ 9, ECF No. 83; Wilson Decl., ¶ 8, ECF No. 84; Wilson Depo. at 111:11-112:9,  
11 Connolly Decl., Ex. S, ECF No. 93-2. They say that Bui was close enough to Officers Ortiz and  
12 Wilson to be able to stab either of them if he lunged towards them. Wilson Decl. ¶ 9, ECF No. 84;  
13 Whitfield Decl. ¶ 10, ECF No. 83. Officers Ortiz and Wilson repeatedly told Bui to drop the knife,  
14 but he did not do so. UF, Fact 29; Ortiz Decl. ¶¶ 8-9, ECF No. 82; Whitfield Decl. ¶¶ 8, 10, ECF  
15 No. 83; Wilson Decl. ¶¶ 9-10, ECF No. 84; Sharon H. Depo. at 43:4-17, 44:4-9, 58:2-4, Connolly  
16 Decl., Ex. N, ECF No. 91; Jason W. Depo. at 37:2-15, 40:12-14, 41:18-42:5, 45:2-11, Connolly  
17 Decl., Ex. H, ECF No. 88; Marvin C. Depo. at 45:7- 46:2, Connolly Decl., Ex. J, ECF No. 89;  
18 Andrew K. Depo. at 34:16-25, Connolly Decl., Ex. C, ECF No. 86-3; Aaron L. Depo. at 19:16-21,  
19 22:3-6, 24:7-12, 42:22-43:6, 43:12-44:9, Connolly Decl., Ex. B, ECF No. 86-2; Simon P. Depo. at  
20 29:3-7, 57:16-21, Connolly Decl., Ex. O, ECF No. 92. Still holding the knife in the air in an  
21 aggressive manner, Bui continued down the hallway (at a regular or quick pace) and toward Officers  
22 Ortiz and Wilson, and Officers Ortiz and Wilson continued to order Bui to drop the knife. UF, Fact  
23 30; Ortiz Decl. ¶¶ 8-9, ECF No. 82; Wilson Decl., ¶¶ 8-9, ECF No. 84; Tran Depo. at 67:14-25,  
24 Connolly Decl., Ex. P, ECF No. 92-1; Sharon H. Depo. at 44:4-17, 56:7-58:4, Connolly Decl., Ex.  
25 N, ECF No. 91; Andrew K. Depo. at 34:5-9, 34:16-25, Connolly Decl., Ex. C, ECF No. 86-3; Sandra  
26 W. Depo. at 57:14-20, Connolly Decl., Ex. M, ECF No. 90-2; Jason W. Depo. at 39:9-10, 41:1-42:5,  
27 47:3-9, Connolly Decl., Ex. H, ECF No. 88; Marvin C. Depo. at 58:5-11, 77:4-8, 90:3-8, Connolly  
28 Decl., Ex. J, ECF No. 89; Jonathan Y. Depo. at 47:3-48:4, 48:9-11, 61:8-17, Connolly Decl., Ex. I,

1 ECF No. 88-1. Facing Bui, the officers, with their guns drawn, walked backwards and side-by-side  
2 and retreated into the living room. Ortiz Decl. ¶ 8, ECF No. 82; Wilson Decl. ¶ 10, ECF No. 84;  
3 Andrew K. Depo. at 34:5-9, Connolly Decl., Ex. C, ECF No. 86-3; Marvin C. Depo. at 47:11-14,  
4 Connolly Decl., Ex. J, ECF No. 89. The officers backed up to somewhere in the living room, UF,  
5 Fact 31, and continued to order Bui to drop the knife, Ortiz Decl. ¶ 9, ECF No. 82; Whitfield Decl. ¶  
6 10, ECF No. 83; Wilson Decl. ¶ 10, ECF No. 84; Andrew K. Depo. at 35:10-13, Connolly Decl., Ex.  
7 C, ECF No. 86-3; Jason W. Depo. at 46:2-11, Connolly Decl., Ex. H, ECF No. 88; Tran Depo. at  
8 63:18-20, 66:21-25, Connolly Decl., Ex. P, ECF No. 92-1. But Bui did not stop. UF, Fact 32.  
9 Instead, Bui continued to advance toward Officers Ortiz and Wilson and threatened them with the  
10 knife. Ortiz Decl. ¶ 9, ECF No. 82; Wilson Decl. ¶¶ 10-11, ECF No. 84; Jason W. Depo. at 42:9-  
11 45:11, Connolly Decl., Ex. H, ECF No. 88. The officers ran out of room to retreat because some of  
12 the teens and living room furniture were in the way. Ortiz Decl. ¶ 9, ECF No. 82; Whitfield Decl. ¶  
13 10, ECF No. 83; Wilson Decl. ¶ 11, ECF No. 84; Jason W. Depo. at 42:9-43:3, Connolly Decl., Ex.  
14 H, ECF No. 88. Believing that they and some of the teenagers were at imminent risk of being  
15 stabbed or otherwise seriously injured by Bui, the officers shot three times at Bui. UF, Fact, 33; UF,  
16 Fact 35; Ortiz Decl. ¶ 9, ECF No. 82; Wilson Decl. ¶ 11, ECF No. 84; Ortiz Depo at 97:24-99:19,  
17 Connolly Decl., Ex. L, ECF No. 90-1; Wilson Depo. at 117:23-118:8, Connolly Decl., Ex. S, ECF  
18 No. 93-2. When they shot, the officers were approximately 4 to 5 feet away from Bui. Whitfield  
19 Decl. ¶ 10, ECF No. 83; Wilson Decl. ¶ 11, ECF No. 84; Jonathan Y. Depo. at 60:24-61:7, Connolly  
20 Decl., Ex. I, ECF No. 88-1. Two of the shots hit the front of Bui’s body, fatally injuring him. UF,  
21 Fact 34; Smith Decl. ¶ 10, ECF No. 85.

22 Between 45 and 90 seconds elapsed between the time the officers entered the house and the time  
23 shots were fired. UF, Fact 36. Approximately 10-15 seconds elapsed from the time the officers first  
24 had contact with Bui at the bathroom door to when the shots were fired. Ortiz Depo. at 109:18-25,  
25 Connolly Decl., Ex. L, ECF No. 90-1. The officers are trained that, when circumstances require the  
26 use of their guns, they should aim for the body center mass of the target individual. Ortiz Decl. ¶ 9,  
27 ECF No. 82; Wilson Decl. ¶ 11, ECF No. 84. Both Officers Ortiz and Wilson attended Peace  
28 Officer Standards and Training (“POST”) academies. Corriea Depo. at 71:7-73:1, Schwartz Decl.,

1 Ex. C, ECF No. 121-3; Ortiz Depo. at 14:4-13, 19:19-20:8, Schwartz Decl., Ex. L, ECF No. 121-12;  
2 Wilson Depo. at 16:5-17:3, Schwartz Decl., Ex. Q, ECF No. 121-17; *see* Clark Decl. ¶¶ 2(b), 5-9,  
3 Exs. C-E, ECF No. 124.

4 While it is undisputed that Officers Ortiz and Wilson told Bui to drop the knife, UF, Fact 29; UF,  
5 Fact 30, it is unclear whether they told him that they would shoot him if he did not do so. *Compare*  
6 Ortiz Decl. ¶ 8, ECF No. 82 (testifying that he warned he would shoot); Aaron L. Depo. at 22:4-6  
7 (“The police pulled their guns on [Bui] and said, ‘Drop the weapon or we’ll shoot,’ or something  
8 like that.”), 44:2-9 (“Then the cops warned they would shoot.”), *with* Wilson Depo. at 71:12-13,  
9 71:21-23, 112:20-113:5, 114:22-115:23, Schwartz Decl., Ex. Q, ECF No. 121-17 (no mention of a  
10 warning of imminent force); Wilson Decl. ¶10, ECF No. 84 (same); Marvin C. Depo. at 45:12-46:7,  
11 77:113-14, Schwartz Decl., Ex. B, ECF No. 121-2 (same); Joanne G. Depo. at 32:21-33:7, Schwartz  
12 Decl., Ex. E, ECF No. 121-5 (same); Melina H. Depo. at 87:13-23, Schwartz Decl., Ex. H, ECF No.  
13 121-8 (same); Sharon H. Depo. at 43:4-17, 69:19-22, 70:21-23, Schwartz Decl., Ex. I, ECF No. 121-  
14 9 (same); Andrew K. Depo. at 34:16-22, 40:20-25, 53:5-9, Schwartz Decl., Ex. J, ECF No. 121-10  
15 (same); Simon P. Depo. at 26:13-15, 57:16-18, Schwartz Decl., Ex. M, ECF No. 121-13 (same);  
16 Tran Depo. at 21:24-22:1, 66:21-25, Schwartz Decl., Ex. O, ECF No. 121-15 (same); Wilson Depo.  
17 at 71:21-23, 112:20-113:5, 114:22-115:2, Schwartz Decl., Ex. Q, ECF No. 121-17 (same); Jason W.  
18 Depo. at 37:11-13, 38:16-17, 40:12-14, Schwartz Decl., Ex. R, ECF No. 121-18 (same); Sandra W.  
19 Depo. at 56:2-18, 56:23-57:4, Schwartz Decl., Ex. T, ECF No. 121-20 (same).

## 20 **II. PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

21 Plaintiffs filed their complaint in this court on August 24, 2011. Complaint, ECF No. 1. They  
22 brought: (1) as successor in interest to Bui’s estate and pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983<sup>3</sup>, a claim  
23 against Officers Ortiz and Wilson for violation of Bui’s Fourth Amendment right to be free from  
24 excessive force; (2) on their own behalf and pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983, a claim against Officers

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26 <sup>3</sup> Under California’s survival statute, Bui’s § 1983 claim survived his death. *See* Cal. Civ.  
27 Proc. Code § 377.20; *Chaudhry v. City of Los Angeles*, --- F.3d ---, 2014 WL 2030195, at \*4 (9th  
28 Cir. May 19, 2014) (citing *Smith v. City of Fontana*, 818 F.2d 1411, 1416-17 (9th Cir. 1987),  
*overruled on other grounds by Hodgers-Durgin v. de la Vina*, 199 F.3d 1037 (9th Cir. 1999) (en  
banc)).

1 Ortiz and Wilson for interference with their Fourteenth Amendment due process liberty interest in  
2 their parental relationship with Bui; (3) as successor in interest to Bui’s estate and pursuant to 42  
3 U.S.C. § 1983 and *Monell v. Department of Social Services*, 436 U.S. 658 (1978), a claim against  
4 CCSF for failure to train; and (4) on their own behalf and pursuant to California Civil Procedure  
5 Code § 377.60, a claim against CCSF (under a theory of respondeat superior) for wrongful death<sup>4</sup>.  
6 *Id.* ¶¶ 29-53.

7 Defendants now move for summary judgment on all four claims. Motion, ECF No. 81.  
8 Plaintiffs oppose the motion, except as to their *Monell* claim. Opposition, ECF No. 120; *id.* at 9 n.1.  
9 Defendants filed a reply. Reply, ECF No. 110. The court held a hearing on the matter on June 26,  
10 2014. 6/26/2014 Minute Order, ECF No. 136.

## 11 ANALYSIS

### 12 I. LEGAL STANDARD

13 The court must grant a motion for summary judgment if the movant shows that there is no  
14 genuine dispute as to any material fact and the moving party is entitled to judgment as a matter of  
15 law. Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(a); *Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc.*, 477 U.S. 242, 247-48 (1986). Material  
16 facts are those that may affect the outcome of the case. *Anderson*, 477 U.S. at 248. A dispute about  
17 a material fact is genuine if there is sufficient evidence for a reasonable jury to return a verdict for  
18 the non-moving party. *Id.* at 248-49.

19 The party moving for summary judgment bears the initial burden of informing the court of the  
20 basis for the motion, and identifying portions of the pleadings, depositions, answers to  
21 interrogatories, admissions, or affidavits which demonstrate the absence of a triable issue of material  
22 fact. *Celotex Corp. v. Catrett*, 477 U.S. 317, 323 (1986). To meet its burden, “the moving party  
23 must either produce evidence negating an essential element of the nonmoving party’s claim or  
24 defense or show that the nonmoving party does not have enough evidence of an essential element to  
25 carry its ultimate burden of persuasion at trial.” *Nissan Fire & Marine Ins. Co., Ltd. v. Fritz*

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26  
27 <sup>4</sup> Plaintiffs’ Fourteenth Amendment claim is not duplicative of their wrongful death claim  
28 because prevailing on their Fourteenth Amendment claim entitles them to attorneys’ fees, *see* 42  
U.S.C. § 1988(b), while prevailing on their wrongful death does not. *See Chaudhry*, 2014 WL  
2030195, at \*7.

1 *Companies, Inc.*, 210 F.3d 1099, 1102 (9th Cir. 2000); *see Devereaux v. Abbey*, 263 F.3d 1070, 1076  
2 (9th Cir. 2001) (“When the nonmoving party has the burden of proof at trial, the moving party need  
3 only point out ‘that there is an absence of evidence to support the nonmoving party’s case.’”)  
4 (quoting *Celotex*, 477 U.S. at 325).

5 If the moving party meets its initial burden, the burden shifts to the non-moving party to produce  
6 evidence supporting its claims or defenses. *Nissan Fire & Marine Ins. Co., Ltd.*, 210 F.3d at 1103.  
7 The non-moving party may not rest upon mere allegations or denials of the adverse party’s evidence,  
8 but instead must produce admissible evidence that shows there is a genuine issue of material fact for  
9 trial. *See Devereaux*, 263 F.3d at 1076. If the non-moving party does not produce evidence to show  
10 a genuine issue of material fact, the moving party is entitled to summary judgment. *See Celotex*, 477  
11 U.S. at 323.

12 In ruling on a motion for summary judgment, inferences drawn from the underlying facts are  
13 viewed in the light most favorable to the non-moving party. *Matsushita Elec. Indus. Co. v. Zenith*  
14 *Radio Corp.*, 475 U.S. 574, 587 (1986).

## 15 **II. PLAINTIFFS’ FOURTH AMENDMENT CLAIMS**

16 Plaintiffs’ first claim is against Officers Ortiz and Wilson for violating Bui’s Fourth Amendment  
17 right to be free from excessive force. Defendants argue that Plaintiffs’ claim fails because Officers  
18 Ortiz and Wilson used reasonable force and are protected by qualified immunity. As explained  
19 below, the court disagrees because genuine issues of material fact prevent the court from deciding  
20 whether a Fourth Amendment violation occurred or whether the officers are protected by qualified  
21 immunity.

### 22 **A. Genuine Issues of Material Fact Prevent the Court from Ruling that Defendants Acted** 23 **Reasonably as a Matter of Law**

24 42 U.S.C. § 1983 provides a cause of action for the deprivation of “rights, privileges, or  
25 immunities secured by the Constitution or laws of the United States” by any person acting “under  
26 color of any statute, ordinance, regulation, custom, or usage.” *Gomez v. Toledo*, 446 U.S. 635, 639  
27 (1980). Section 1983 is not itself a source for substantive rights, but rather a method for vindicating  
28 federal rights conferred elsewhere. *See Graham v. Connor*, 490 U.S. 386, 393–394 (1989). To state

1 a claim under § 1983, a plaintiff must allege: (1) the conduct complained of was committed by a  
2 person acting under color of state law; and (2) the conduct violated a right secured by the  
3 Constitution or laws of the United States. *See West v. Atkins*, 487 U.S. 42, 48 (1988).

4 It is undisputed that Officers Ortiz and Wilson were acting under color of state law, and  
5 Plaintiffs allege that the officers violated Bui’s Fourth Amendment right to be free from  
6 “unreasonable searches and seizures,” U.S. Const. amend. IV, when they “shot [him] without lawful  
7 justification.” Complaint, ECF No. 1 ¶ 30. It is undisputed that Mr. Bui was “seized” within the  
8 meaning of the Fourth Amendment. Thus, the issue before the court is whether the force used  
9 during his seizure was “objectively reasonable.” *Arpin v. Santa Clara Valley Transp. Agency*, 261  
10 F.3d 912, 921 (9th Cir. 2001) (citing *Graham*, 490 U.S. at 388).

11 “Determining whether the force used to effect a particular seizure is reasonable under the Fourth  
12 Amendment requires a careful balancing of the nature and quality of the intrusion on the individual’s  
13 Fourth Amendment interests against the countervailing governmental interests at stake.” *Graham*,  
14 490 U.S. at 396 (internal citations and quotations omitted). To do so, a court must evaluate “the  
15 facts and circumstances of each particular case, including [(1)] the severity of the crime at issue,  
16 [(2)] whether the suspect poses an immediate threat to the safety of the officers or others, and [(3)]  
17 whether he is actively resisting arrest or attempting to evade arrest by flight.” *Graham*, 490 U.S. at  
18 396 (citing *Tennessee v. Garner*, 471 U.S. 1, 8-9 (1985)). The most important of these three factors  
19 is whether the suspect poses an immediate threat to the safety of the officers or others. *Id.* The  
20 *Graham* factors, however, are not exhaustive. *George v. Morris*, 736 F.3d 829, 837-38 (9th Cir.  
21 2013). Indeed, because “there are no per se rules in the Fourth Amendment excessive force  
22 context,” *Mattos v. Agarano*, 661 F.3d 433, 441 (9th Cir. 2011) (en banc), courts are to “examine the  
23 totality of the circumstances and consider ‘whatever specific factors may be appropriate in a  
24 particular case, whether or not listed in *Graham*.’” *Bryan v. McPherson*, 630 F.3d 805, 826 (9th Cir.  
25 2010) (quoting *Franklin v. Foxworth*, 31 F.3d 873, 876 (9th Cir. 1994)). “Other relevant factors  
26 include the availability of less intrusive alternatives to the force employed, whether proper warnings  
27 were given[,] and whether it should have been apparent to officers that the person they used force  
28 against was emotionally disturbed.” *Glenn v. Washington County*, 673 F.3d 864, 872 (9th Cir. 2011)

1 (citations omitted).

2 “The reasonableness of a particular use of force must be judged from the perspective of a  
3 reasonable officer on the scene, rather than with the 20/20 vision of hindsight.” *Graham*, 490 U.S.  
4 at 396 (1989) (citing *Terry v. Ohio*, 392 U.S. 1, 20-22 (1968)); *see id.* at 396-97 (“Not every push  
5 or shove, even if it may later seem unnecessary in the peace of a judge’s chambers,’ . . . violates the  
6 Fourth Amendment.”) (quoting *Johnson v. Glick*, 481 F.2d 1028, 1033 (2d Cir. 1973)). This is  
7 because “[t]he calculus of reasonableness must embody allowance for the fact that police officers are  
8 often forced to make split-second judgments—in circumstances that are tense, uncertain, and rapidly  
9 evolving—about the amount of force that is necessary in a particular situation.” *Id.*

10 As the court described above, the two sides have dramatically different accounts of what Bui did  
11 and what happened to him. On one hand, Defendants provide admissible evidence to support their  
12 story that Bui came down the hall after the officers and attacked, or at least threatened, them with  
13 the knife—the same knife with which Bui had stabbed a teenaged girl moments before. Defendants  
14 also provide admissible evidence showing that the officers responded to the attack by raising their  
15 guns, instructing Bui to drop the knife, and retreating until they no longer safely could. It was only  
16 then, when they and some of the teenagers were at imminent risk of being stabbed or otherwise  
17 seriously injured, that the officers shot Bui. If this is in fact what happened, under the applicable  
18 authority cited by Defendants, a reasonable jury could find that the officers’ actions were  
19 reasonable. *See Plumhoff v. Rickard*, --- U.S. ----, 2014 WL 2178335, at \*3, \*8 (2014) (the officer  
20 acted reasonably in shooting the decedent who posed a grave public safety risk where it was  
21 undisputed that the decedent led several officers on a five-minute car chase that exceeded 100 miles  
22 per hour, nearly collided with more than 24 other vehicles, actually did collide with a police car,  
23 and, after crashing into different police car, reversed and maneuvered onto another street and tried to  
24 resume his flight once again); *Wilkinson v. Torres*, 610 F.3d 546, 549, 551 (9th Cir. 2010) (the  
25 officer acted reasonably in shooting the decedent where, even construing the facts in the light most  
26 favorably to the plaintiffs, the decedent posed an immediate threat to the officer and others because  
27 the decedent, driving a van, led the officer on a high-speed and reckless chase, crashed into a  
28 telephone pole, ignored the officer’s instruction to show his hands and stop the vehicle and instead

1 accelerated the van while another officer was either lying fallen on the ground or standing but  
2 disoriented near the van, and the shooting officer believed the other officer to be at risk of being run  
3 over); *Blanford v. Sacramento County*, 406 F.3d 1110, 1112-14, 1117-19 (9th Cir. 2005) (the  
4 officers acted reasonably in shooting the plaintiff and had probable cause to believe that the plaintiff  
5 posed a threat of serious physical harm to the officers or others where it was undisputed that the  
6 plaintiff was walking around a neighborhood while wearing a ski mask, appeared to be breaking into  
7 a house, growled or roared loudly while raising a two-and-a-half foot sword, and did not obey the  
8 officers' commands to drop it); *Reynolds v. County of San Diego*, 84 F.3d 1162, 1164-65, 1168-70  
9 (9th Cir. 1996) (the officer acted reasonably in shooting the plaintiff where it was undisputed that  
10 the erratically-behaving plaintiff, while being arrested, suddenly picked up a knife, ignored the  
11 officer's commands to drop it, and then swung it at the officer at close range); *Roy v. Inhabitants of*  
12 *City of Lewiston*, 42 F.3d 691, 693, 695-96 (1st Cir. 1994) (the officer acted reasonably in shooting  
13 the plaintiff where it was undisputed that after shouting at the officer "I'll show you" and going into  
14 his house, the plaintiff returned holding two steak knives, ignored the officer's warnings to drop  
15 them, advanced toward the officer while flailing his arms, and made a kicking or lunging motion  
16 toward the officer); *Rhodes v. McDannel*, 945 F.2d 117 (6th Cir. 1991) (the officer acted reasonably  
17 in shooting the decedent where it was undisputed that the decedent had previously threatened a  
18 victim with a machete, advanced toward the officers and the victim with the machete raised, and  
19 ignored the officers warnings to drop it); *Pham v. City of San Jose*, Case No.: 5:11-CV-01526-EJD,  
20 2013 WL 5443027, at \*2-3, \*7 (N.D. Cal. Sept. 20, 2013) (the officers acted reasonably in shooting  
21 the decedent where it was undisputed that the decedent had a knife, had already slit one victim's  
22 throat with it, was trying to re-enter the house which contained another potential victim, ignored the  
23 officers' instructions to drop the knife, continued to resist arrest even after being tased, and charged  
24 at one of the officers); *Deng v. Loeffler*, No. 2:10-CV-00277-PMP-GWF, 2011 WL 2792340, at \*1-2  
25 (D. Nev. July 14, 2011) (the officers acted reasonably in shooting the decedent where it was  
26 undisputed that the decedent was holding two knives, running at one of the officer with both hands  
27 above his head, ignored the officer's instructions to drop the knives, and, after being shot once,  
28 appeared as if he was going to lunge after the officer while still holding one of the knives); *Barber v.*



1 *City of Santa Rosa*, No. C-08-5649 MMC, 2010 WL 5069868, at \*1-2, \*6 (N.D. Cal. Dec. 7, 2010)  
2 (the officer acted reasonably in shooting the decedent where it was undisputed that the decedent  
3 suffered from schizophrenia, was agitated and armed with a butcher knife, and advanced toward the  
4 officer while making verbal threats and raising the knife in an attack position); *MacEachern v. City*  
5 *of Manhattan Beach*, 623 F. Supp. 1092, 1095-96, 1103-04 (C.D. Cal. 2009) (holding that the officer  
6 acted reasonably in shooting the decedent where the plaintiff did not directly counter the defendants'  
7 evidence showing that the decedent matched the description of a suspect who threatened a victim  
8 with a knife, was armed with a knife and ignored the officer's instructions to drop it, and jabbed it at  
9 the officer while taking steps toward him); *Martinez v. County of Los Angeles*, 47 Cal. App. 4th 334,  
10 339-40, 344-46 (Cal. Ct. App. 1996) (the officer acted reasonably in shooting the decedent where it  
11 was undisputed that the decedent appeared to be high on PCP and matched the description of a  
12 suspect who had brandished a knife, was armed with a carving knife that he held at his waist or with  
13 the blade pointed skyward, crossed a busy intersection in complete disregard to oncoming traffic and  
14 advanced toward the officer and others, ignored the officer's instruction to stop and drop the knife,  
15 and shouted at the officer that he was the one he was looking for and that if the officer did not kill  
16 him he would kill the officer).

17 On the other hand, in all of these other cases, it was undisputed that the plaintiff or decedent  
18 attacked, or at least threatened the safety of, the officers or others. But in this case, Plaintiffs  
19 provide admissible evidence of their own to support their story that Bui, who was much smaller than  
20 the two officers, did nothing like that—and it is Plaintiffs' view of the facts that the court must take  
21 into account for purposes of Defendants' motion. According to Plaintiffs' evidence, while Bui did  
22 have the X-Acto knife in his hand, it was always down at his side, and rather than charging at the  
23 officers, he assumed a defensive, cringing posture and shuffled slowly down the hall because the  
24 officers told him to come out of the bathroom. They also present evidence that suggests Bui was not  
25 directly facing the officers in the erect position and was turned away to his right from Officer Ortiz  
26 when he was shot. And if this was what happened, under the applicable authority cited by Plaintiffs,  
27 a reasonable jury could find that the officers' actions were not reasonable. *See George*, 736 F.3d at  
28 832-33, 838-39 (if a suspect is armed (or reasonably suspected of being armed), a furtive movement,

1 harrowing gesture, or serious verbal threat might create an immediate threat, but the mere fact that a  
2 suspect is armed with a deadly weapon does not render an officer’s shooting of the suspect per se  
3 reasonable under the Fourth Amendment; if the officers “indeed shot the sixty-four-year-old  
4 decedent without objective provocation while he used his walker, with gun trained on the ground,  
5 then a reasonable jury could determine that they violated the Fourth Amendment”); *Glenn*, 673 F.3d  
6 at 867-69, 872-78 (while a suspect’s possession of a knife is an important consideration, it is not  
7 dispositive on its own; finding that a jury could find that the officers’ decision to shoot an individual  
8 holding a pocket knife, which the individual did not brandish at anyone, violated the Constitution);  
9 *Harris v. Roderick*, 126 F.3d 1189, 1204 (9th Cir. 1997) (“Law enforcement officials may not kill  
10 suspects who do not pose an immediate threat to their safety or to the safety of others simply  
11 because they are armed.”); *Curnow v. Ridgecrest Police*, 952 F.2d 321, 323, 325 (9th Cir. 1991)  
12 (holding that deadly force was unreasonable where, according to the plaintiff’s version of facts, the  
13 decedent possessed a gun but was not pointing it at the officers and was not facing the officers when  
14 they shot him).

15 At the July 26, 2014 hearing, Defendants argued that it is immaterial whether Bui had the knife  
16 down at his side, because he nevertheless was “advancing” toward the officers, did not drop the  
17 knife, and had already stabbed someone, but the court does not agree that, under the authority cited  
18 above, this is true as a matter of law. The Ninth Circuit has made clear that “there are no per se  
19 rules in the Fourth Amendment excessive force context,” *Mattos*, 661 F.3d at 441, and that court  
20 must “examine the totality of the circumstances, *Bryan*, 630 F.3d at 826. Here, the court believes  
21 that it matters whether Bui had the knife pointed toward the officers or down at his side, was  
22 walking normally or shuffling, was “advancing” down the hallway at a normal pace or extremely  
23 slowly, and was directly facing the officers when shot or was in a cringing, defensive position.  
24 After drawing all inferences from the underlying facts in the light most favorable to Plaintiffs, a  
25 reasonable jury could conclude that the officers acted unreasonably. The court disagrees that the  
26 case law establishes as a matter of law that the officers acted reasonably.

27 Plaintiffs also point to disputed facts relating to other factors bearing upon the court’s inquiry.  
28 One factor is whether the officers knew or should have known that Bui had mental health problems.

1 See *Glenn*, 673 F.3d at 875-76 (reversing the district court’s grant of summary judgment in part  
2 because the decedent, who was threatening only himself, obviously was emotionally disturbed and  
3 the officers should have assigned greater weight to this fact) (citing *Deorle v. Rutherford*, 272 F.3d  
4 1272, 1283 (9th Cir. 2001) (while explicitly not adopting a per se rule establishing two different  
5 classifications for mentally disabled persons and serious criminals, still emphasizing that “where it is  
6 or should be apparent to the officers that the individual involved is emotionally disturbed,” this is a  
7 factor to be considered in determining the reasonableness of the force employed)); *Burns v. City of*  
8 *Redwood City*, 737 F. Supp. 2d 1047, 1059-60 (N.D. Cal. 2010) (denying the defendants’ summary  
9 judgment motion in part because of disputed facts surrounding the officers’ awareness of the  
10 plaintiff’s mental health condition, which “has a role to play in the reasonableness inquiry”).  
11 Another is whether the officers (who told Bui to drop the knife) also told him that they would shoot  
12 him if he did not drop the knife and whether Bui heard or understood the warnings that they gave  
13 him.<sup>5</sup> See *Glenn*, 673 F.3d at 876 (reversing the district court’s grant of summary judgment in part  
14 because it was not clear whether the decedent heard or understood the officers’ warnings and the  
15 decedent may have been confused about whether his life was in immediate danger) (citing *Deorle*,  
16 272 F.3d at 1284 (instructing that “warnings should be given, when feasible, if the use of force may  
17 result in serious injury, and that the giving of a warning of the failure to do so is a factor to be  
18 considered in applying the *Graham* balancing test”).

19 In sum, the parties dispute facts that bear directly on whether a reasonable officer could have  
20 viewed Bui as an immediate threat to the officers or others (including whether he was shuffling,  
21 cringing, defensive, and had his hand down or whether he instead was aggressive and menacing).  
22 Resolution of these different accounts of how Bui was acting involves credibility determinations.  
23 Resolution of the disputed material facts is a job for the jury, and there is sufficient evidence for a  
24 reasonable jury to return a verdict for either party. Moreover, after drawing all inferences from the  
25 underlying facts in the light most favorable to Plaintiffs for purposes of Defendants’ motion, and

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26  
27 <sup>5</sup> Defendants correctly point out that warnings are required “when feasible,” but this further  
28 demonstrates the inappropriateness for deciding this issue on summary judgment: given the disputes  
about what happened, the court cannot decide whether it was feasible for give Bui more detailed  
warnings that they say they did.

1 considering all the authority cited by Defendants, the court cannot say, as a matter of law, that the  
2 officers acted reasonably in shooting Bui. The court thus denies Defendants’ motion insofar as it  
3 asks the court conclude that the officers did not violate Bui’s Fourth Amendment right to be free  
4 from excessive force.<sup>6</sup> See *George*, 736 F.3d at 838-39 (affirming the district court’s denial of the  
5 defendants’ motion for summary judgment because it could not say the officers assuredly stayed  
6 within Constitutional bounds without knowing “[w]hat happened at the rear of [the plaintiff’s]  
7 residence during the time [the plaintiff] walked out into the open on his patio and the fatal shot [was  
8 fired]”); *Espinosa v. City and County of San Francisco*, 598 F.3d 528, 532 (9th Cir. 2010) (“In this  
9

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10  
11 <sup>6</sup> Plaintiffs contend that they also bring a Fourth Amendment claim based on the Officers  
12 Ortiz’s and Wilson’s “provocation” of the confrontation that led to Bui being shot. See Opposition,  
13 ECF No. 27-31. As the Ninth Circuit has explained, “where an officer intentionally or recklessly  
14 provokes a violent confrontation, if the provocation is an independent Fourth Amendment violation,  
15 he may be liable for his otherwise defensive use of deadly force.” *Billington v. Smith*, 292 F.3d  
16 1177, 1189 (9th Cir. 2002); see *Alexander v. City and County of San Francisco*, 29 F.3d 1355, 1366  
17 (9th Cir. 1994). In that circumstance, however, the “basis for liability for the subsequent [defensive]  
18 use of force is the initial constitutional violation, which must be established under the Fourth  
19 Amendment’s reasonableness standard.” *Id.* at 1190. Plaintiffs argue in their opposition that  
20 Officers Ortiz and Wilson recklessly and intentionally provoked the confrontation because they  
21 subsequently testified that they would not have done anything differently had they known that Bui  
22 was mentally ill and that the officers’ allegedly unlawful entry into the house and pointing of their  
23 guns at the allegedly non-threatening Bui constitute independent Fourth Amendment violations. See  
24 Opposition, ECF No. 120 at 29-31. Defendants, in turn, argue in their reply that the officers did not  
25 commit independent Fourth Amendment violations and, nevertheless, Plaintiffs cannot introduce this  
26 new theory of liability this late in the case. See Reply, ECF No. 110 at 13-20.

27  
28 The court declines hold that Defendants are entitled to summary judgment with respect to a  
Fourth Amendment provocation theory. First, Defendants say that they would have conducted more  
detailed discovery regarding the alleged independent Fourth Amendment violations had it been clear  
that Plaintiffs brought a provocation theory claim, and the court is not convinced there has been  
sufficient briefing on the matter. Second, the concept of escalation is raised in the Complaint, see  
Complaint, ECF No. 1, ¶ 20, and the context of what happened is relevant to whether the officers  
acted reasonably. The case is charged as an excessive-force-resulting-in-wrongful-death case  
because that is what the harm is. That a stand-alone provocation theory claim is not explicitly  
alleged in the complaint does not preclude the court from considering the entire context of what  
happened (from entry to shooting) when determining whether the officers’ subsequent conduct was  
reasonable. The court expressed this opinion at the June 26, 2014 hearing, and neither party took  
issue with it. Third, pleadings often are amended to conform to the proof, even at trial, and to the  
extent that there are disputes, they seem better addressed by motions in limine or jury instructions.

1 case, the district court properly denied the summary judgment motion because there are genuine  
2 issues of fact regarding whether the officers violated [the decedent’s] Fourth Amendment rights.”).  
3 Indeed, as the Ninth Circuit explained when confronted with similar circumstances:

4           Balancing these various considerations, we hold that the district court erred in  
5 granting summary judgment on the constitutionality of the officers’ use of force. We  
6 recognize that the officers have offered evidence that could support a verdict in their  
7 favor. A jury could view the facts as the district court did, and likewise reach the  
8 conclusion that the officers’ use of force was reasonable. But on summary judgment,  
9 the district court is not permitted to act as a factfinder. The circumstances of this case  
can be viewed in various ways, and a jury should have the opportunity to assess the  
reasonableness of the force used after hearing all the evidence. Because the disputed  
facts and inferences could support a verdict for either party, we are compelled to  
reverse the district court’s entry of summary judgment.

10 *Glenn*, 673 F.3d at 878 (internal citation omitted); *see also Burns*, 737 F. Supp. 2d at 1058-59  
11 (“Because an excessive force claim ‘nearly always requires a jury to sift through disputed factual  
12 contentions, and to draw inferences therefrom,’ the Ninth Circuit has also instructed that summary  
13 judgment in excessive force cases should be granted sparingly.”) (citing *Santos v. Gates*, 287 F.3d  
14 846, 853 (9th Cir. 2002)).

15           **B. The Officers Are Not Entitled to Qualified Immunity at This Time**

16           Defendants assert that even if Officers Ortiz and Wilson violated Bui’s Fourth Amendment right  
17 by using excessive force, they are entitled to qualified immunity because as of 2010 case law was  
18 clear that officers may lawfully use deadly force when a suspect threatens and assaults the officer  
19 with a knife. *See Motion*, ECF No. 81 at 22-25.

20           “The doctrine of qualified immunity protects government officials ‘from liability for civil  
21 damages insofar as their conduct does not violate clearly established statutory or constitutional  
22 rights of which a reasonable person would have known.’” *Pearson v. Callahan*, 555 U.S. 223, 231  
23 (2009) (quoting *Harlow v. Fitzgerald*, 457 U.S. 800, 818 (1982)). “Qualified immunity balances  
24 two important interests—the need to hold public officials accountable when they exercise power  
25 irresponsibly and the need to shield officials from harassment, distraction, and liability when they  
26 perform their duties reasonably.” *Id.* “The protection of qualified immunity applies regardless of  
27 whether the government official’s error is ‘a mistake of law, a mistake of fact, or a mistake based on  
28 mixed questions of law and fact.’” *Id.* (quoting *Groh v. Ramirez*, 540 U.S. 551, 567 (2004))

1 (Kennedy, J., dissenting)).

2 In *Saucier v. Katz*, 533 U.S. 194 (2001), the Supreme Court “mandated a two-step sequence for  
3 resolving government officials’ qualified immunity claims.” *Id.* at 232. “First, a court must decide  
4 whether the facts that a plaintiff has alleged (see Fed. Rules Civ. Proc. 12(b)(6), (c)) or shown (see  
5 Rules 50, 56) make out a violation of a constitutional right.” *Id.* (citing *Saucier*, 533 U.S. at 201).  
6 This part of the inquiry “mirrors the substantive summary judgment decision on the merits.” *Sorrels*  
7 *v. McKee*, 290 F.3d 965, 969 (9th Cir. 2002). “If no constitutional right would have been violated  
8 were the allegations established,” then the officer is entitled to qualified immunity. *Saucier*, 533  
9 U.S. at 201. “Second, if the plaintiff has satisfied this first step, the court must decide whether the  
10 right at issue was ‘clearly established’ at the time of defendant’s alleged misconduct.” *Pearson*, 555  
11 U.S. at 232. “Qualified immunity is applicable unless the official’s conduct violated a clearly  
12 established constitutional right.” *Id.* (citing *Anderson v. Creighton*, 483 U.S. 635, 640 (1987)).<sup>7</sup>

13 As to step one, as noted above, genuine issues of material fact exist regarding whether the  
14 officers used objectively reasonable force in shooting Bui.

15 As to step two, “the relevant, dispositive inquiry in determining whether a right is clearly  
16 established is whether it would be clear to a reasonable officer that his conduct was unlawful in the  
17 situation he confronted.” *Saucier*, 533 U.S. at 202; *see also Walker v. Gomez*, 370 F.3d 969, 978  
18 (9th Cir. 2004). This inquiry “must be undertaken in light of the specific context of the case, not as  
19 a broad general proposition.” *Saucier*, 533 U.S. at 201. “This is not to say that an official action is  
20 protected by qualified immunity unless the very action in question has previously been held  
21 unlawful, but it is to say that in the light of pre-existing law the unlawfulness must be apparent.”  
22 *Anderson*, 483 U.S. at 640.

23 Defendants argue that as of 2010, the year the officers shot Bui, “it was well-established that  
24

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25 <sup>7</sup> The Supreme Court has stated that the order in which these questions are addressed is left  
26 to the lower court’s discretion. *Pearson*, 555 U.S. at 236 (“[W]hile the sequence set forth [in  
27 *Saucier*] is often appropriate, it should no longer be regarded as mandatory. The judges of the  
28 district courts and the courts of appeals should be permitted to exercise their sound discretion in  
deciding which of the two prongs of the qualified immunity analysis should be addressed first in  
light of the circumstances in the particular case at hand.”). That said, the Supreme Court also  
believes that the order used in *Saucier* “is often beneficial.” *Id.*

1 ‘where a suspect threatens an officer with a weapon such as a gun or a knife, the officer is justified  
2 in using deadly force.’” Motion, ECF No. 81 at 22-23 (quoting *Billington v. Smith*, 292 F.3d 1177,  
3 1181 (9th Cir. 2002) and citing *Gregory v. County of Maui*, 523 F.3d 1103, 1108 (9th Cir. 2008);  
4 *Long v. City and County of Honolulu*, 511 F.3d 901, 906 (9th Cir. 2007); *Blanford*, 406 F.3d at  
5 1117-18; *Reynolds*, 84 F.3d at 1168). They also argue that as of 2010 it was well-established that  
6 “deadly force is proper when a mentally disturbed suspect threatens and assaults officers with a  
7 knife.” *Id.* at 23 (citing *Reynolds*, 84 F.3d at 1168). But as described above, under Plaintiffs’  
8 version of the facts, Bui did not attack or threaten Officers Ortiz or Wilson or anyone else in the  
9 house after he left the bathroom and before the officers shot him. Again, according to Plaintiffs’  
10 evidence, while Bui did have the X-Acto knife in his hand, it was always down at his side, and  
11 rather than charging at the officers, he assumed a defensive, cringing posture and shuffled slowly  
12 down the hall because the officers told him to come out of the bathroom. They also present  
13 evidence that suggests Bui was not directly facing the officers in the erect position and was turned  
14 away to his right from Officer Ortiz when he was shot.

15 Officers Ortiz and Wilson shot Bui in 2010, and by that time “[c]ase law ha[d] clearly  
16 established that an officer may not use deadly force to apprehend a suspect where the suspect poses  
17 no immediate threat to the officer or others.” *Wilkinson v. Torres*, 610 F.3d 546, 550 (9th Cir.  
18 2010); *see Curnow*, 952 F.2d at 325 (affirming the district court’s denial of qualified immunity for  
19 officers where, under the plaintiff’s version of the 1986 shooting, the officers could not reasonably  
20 have believed the use of deadly force was lawful because the decedent did not point the gun at the  
21 officers and apparently was not facing them when they shot him the first time). It is not enough to  
22 simply say, as Defendants do in arguing for qualified immunity, that Bui posed an immediate threat  
23 to the officer or others because he previously harmed Sharon H., “advanced” toward the officers  
24 while holding a knife, and did not drop it: how Bui moved and the speed at which he moved as he  
25 “advanced” toward the officers matters, and the court does not believe that, under Plaintiffs’ version  
26 of the facts, Bui’s slow, cringed, defensive shuffling while holding an X-Acto knife at his side  
27 constituted an immediate threat to the officers or others. The court does not believe that the case law  
28 cited by Defendants supports such a finding. And if Bui did not present an immediate threat to the

1 officers or others, they were not allowed to use deadly force to apprehend him, and qualified  
2 immunity does not apply to their actions. *See Wilkinson*, 610 F.3d at 550; *Curnow*, 952 F.2d at 325.

3 This is not to say that the officers may not be entitled to qualified immunity after the disputed  
4 material facts are resolved. But for now, the court denies Defendants’ motion insofar as it asks the  
5 court conclude that the officers are entitled to qualified immunity. *See Wilkins v. City of Oakland*,  
6 350 F.3d 949, 956 (9th Cir. 2003) (“Where the officers’ entitlement to qualified immunity depends  
7 on the resolution of disputed issues of fact in their favor, and against the non-moving party,  
8 summary judgment is not appropriate.”); *Santos*, 287 F.3d at 855 n.12 (finding it premature to  
9 decide the qualified immunity issue “because whether the officers may be said to have made a  
10 ‘reasonable mistake’ of fact or law may depend on the jury’s resolution of disputed facts and the  
11 inferences it draws therefrom”) (internal citation omitted); *McCloskey v. Courtnier*, No. C 05-4641  
12 MMC, 2012 WL 646219, at \*3 (N.D. Cal. Feb. 28, 2012); *Burns*, 2010 WL 3340552, at \*12 (“Just  
13 as the question of whether a constitutional violation occurred here turns entirely on whose facts to  
14 accept, so too does the question of immunity. More simply, if [plaintiff] behaved as the officers  
15 contend, their mistake of fact might be objectively reasonable. If he did not, the mistake may be  
16 deemed unreasonable.”); *Herrera v. Las Vegas Metro. Police Dept.*, 298 F. Supp. 2d 1043, 1051 (D.  
17 Nev. 2004) (“[I]t would be premature to determine the officials’ qualified immunity status at this  
18 time [after having concluded that a reasonable jury could find that the action complained of  
19 constituted a violation of the decedent’s Constitutional rights], because whether the officers may be  
20 said to have acted reasonably will depend on the jury’s resolution of the disputed facts.”) (citation  
21 omitted).

### 22 **III. PLAINTIFFS’ FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT CLAIM**

23 Plaintiffs’ second claim is that Defendants’ use of force unconstitutionally interfered with their  
24 rights to familial relationships in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. Defendants argue that  
25 their claim fails because Officers Ortiz’s and Wilson’s conduct did not “shock the conscience” and  
26 are protected by qualified immunity. As explained below, the court disagrees because genuine  
27 issues of material fact prevent the court from deciding whether a Fourteenth Amendment violation  
28 occurred or whether the officers are protected by qualified immunity



1           **A. Genuine Issues of Material Fact Prevent the Court from Deciding Whether a**  
2           **Fourteenth Amendment Violation Occurred**

3           The Fourteenth Amendment’s substantive due process clause protects against the arbitrary or  
4           oppressive exercise of government power. *See County of Sacramento v. Lewis*, 523 U.S. 833, 845-  
5           46 (1998). Parents and children may assert Fourteenth Amendment substantive due process claims  
6           if they are deprived of their liberty interest in the companionship and society of their child or parent  
7           through official conduct. *See Lemire v. Cal. Dept. of Corrections & Rehabilitation*, 726 F.3d 1062,  
8           1075 (9th Cir. 2013) (parents and children); *Smith v. City of Fontana*, 818 F.2d at 1418-19; *Curnow*  
9           *v. Ridgecrest Police*, 952 F.2d 321, 325 (9th Cir. 1991) (parent); *Crumpton v. Gates*, 947 F.2d 1418,  
10          1421-24 (9th Cir. 1991) (child); *cf. Ward v. City of San Jose*, 967 F.2d 280, 284 (9th Cir. 1992)  
11          (sibling has no constitutionally protected interest in brother’s companionship under section 1983).

12          “[T]he Due Process Clause is violated by executive action only when it can be properly  
13          characterized as arbitrary, or conscience shocking, in a constitutional sense.” *County of Sacramento*  
14          *v. Lewis*, 523 U.S. at 845-47; *see Lemire*, 726 F.3d at 1075. The cognizable level of executive abuse  
15          of power is that which “shocks the conscience” or “violates the decencies of civilized conduct.” *Id.*  
16          at 846. Mere negligence or liability grounded in tort does not meet the standard for a substantive  
17          due process decision. *Id.* at 849.

18          “In determining whether excessive force shocks the conscience, the court must first ask ‘whether  
19          the circumstances are such that actual deliberation [by the officer] is practical.’” *Porter v. Osborn*,  
20          546 F.3d 1131, 1137 (9th Cir. 2008) (quoting *Moreland v. Las Vegas Metro. Police Dep’t*, 159 F.3d  
21          365, 372 (9th Cir. 1998) (internal quotation marks omitted)). “Where actual deliberation is  
22          practical, then an officer’s ‘deliberate indifference’ may suffice to shock the conscience. On the  
23          other hand, where a law enforcement officer makes a snap judgment because of an escalating  
24          situation, his conduct may be found to shock the conscience only if he acts with a purpose to harm  
25          unrelated to legitimate law enforcement objectives.” *Hayes v. County of San Diego*, 736 F.3d 1223,  
26          1230 (9th Cir. 2013) (citing *Wilkinson*, 610 F.3d at 554).<sup>8</sup>

27          \_\_\_\_\_

28          <sup>8</sup> In their motion, Defendants appear to assume that the “purpose to harm” standard applies  
and contend that a plaintiff must present evidence that the officer acted with “malice” to prevail on a

1 A court may determine at summary judgment whether the officer had time to deliberate (such  
2 that the deliberate indifference standard applies) or instead had to make a snap judgment because he  
3 found himself in a quickly escalating situation (such that the purpose to harm standard applies), “so  
4 long as the undisputed facts point to one standard or the other.” *Duenez v. City of Manteca*, No.  
5 CIV. S-11-1820 LKK/KJN, 2013 WL 6816375, at \*14 (E.D. Cal. Dec. 23, 2013). But, “[b]y its  
6 nature, the determination of which situation [the officer] actually found himself in is a question of  
7 fact for the jury, so long as there is sufficient evidence to support both standards.” *Id.*

8 In their motion, although they never make it explicit, Defendants argue that the purpose to harm  
9 standard applies because Officers Ortiz and Wilson did not have time to deliberate before having to  
10 shoot Bui because the situation in the house was quickly escalating and he attacked or threatened  
11 them with the knife. *See* Motion, ECF No. 81 at 26-27. Assuming that this standard applies,  
12 Defendants then argue that they are entitled to summary judgment because Plaintiffs do not (and  
13 cannot) point to admissible evidence showing that Officers Ortiz or Wilson acted with a purpose to

14 \_\_\_\_\_  
15 14th Amendment due process claim. *See* Motion, ECF No. 81 at 26-27. Defendants then argue that  
16 Plaintiffs here have not done so. *Id.* Defendants disagree that “malice” is included in the “purpose  
17 to harm” standard. Opposition, ECF No. 120 at 31-32. While it true that the Supreme Court stated  
18 in *Whitley v. Albers*, 475 U.S. 312 (1986), that the standard for claims under the Eighth Amendment  
19 turns on “whether force was applied in a good faith effort to maintain or restore discipline or  
20 maliciously and sadistically for the very purpose of causing harm,” *id.* at 320-21 (quoting *Johnson*  
21 *v. Glick*, 481 F.2d 1028, 1033 (2d Cir. 1973)), and while it also is true that in *Lewis* the Supreme  
22 Court analogized to the prison riot context at issue in *Whitley* when it held that the “purpose to  
23 harm” standard applied to judge an officer’s decisions while in a high-speed pursuit of a suspect on a  
24 motorcycle, *see* 523 U.S. at 852-53, the Supreme Court nevertheless omitted any “malicious” and  
25 “sadistic” language when it explicitly held that “only a purpose to cause harm unrelated to the  
26 legitimate object of arrest will satisfy the element of arbitrary conduct shocking to the conscience”  
27 that is necessary for a due process violation in the context of a high-speed automobile chase, *id.* at  
28 836. Subsequent Ninth Circuit opinions also have failed to include any “malicious” and “sadistic”  
language when stating the “purpose to harm” standard. *See Porter*, 546 F.3d at 1137, 1140 (citing  
*Lewis*, 523 U.S. at 836); *see also Wilkinson*, 610 F.3d at 554 (citing *Porter*, 546 F.3d at 1140).  
Following the Supreme Court’s explicit holding in *Lewis* and the subsequent Ninth Circuit opinions,  
the court finds that Plaintiffs need not present evidence that Officers Ortiz and Wilson acted with  
“malice” to prevail on their 14th Amendment due process claim. *See Rodriguez v. City of Fresno*,  
819 F. Supp. 2d at 937, 948 (E.D. Cal. 2011) (“In this circuit, the phrase ‘maliciously and  
sadistically for the very purpose of causing harm’ is often restated as requiring that the plaintiff  
show that the officer ‘acted with a purpose to harm [the plaintiff] for reasons unrelated to legitimate  
law enforcement objectives.’”) (quoting *Porter*, 546 F.3d at 1137)).

1 harm Bui. Rather, the officers acted in furtherance of a legitimate law enforcement objective, and  
2 they were forced to shoot Bui “in response to the life-threatening circumstances they faced.”  
3 Motion, ECF No. 81 at 27.

4 Even though the officers were not in the house for very long—it is undisputed that between 45  
5 and 90 seconds elapsed between the time the officers entered the house and the time shots were  
6 fired, and approximately 10 to 15 seconds elapsed from the time the officers first had contact with  
7 Bui at the bathroom door to when the shots were fired—Plaintiffs argue that it is not clear whether  
8 Officers Ortiz and Wilson in fact were in a quickly escalating situation that required them to make  
9 the snap judgment to shoot Bui because, as the court described above, there is evidence showing that  
10 while Bui did have the X-Acto knife in his hand, it was always down at his side, and rather than  
11 charging at the officers, he assumed a defensive, cringing posture and shuffled slowly down the hall  
12 because the officers told him to come out of the bathroom. They also present evidence that suggests  
13 Bui was not directly facing the officers when he was shot. Viewing the evidence in favor of  
14 Plaintiffs, it is possible that the deliberate indifference, and not the purpose to harm, standard would  
15 apply here. *See Duenez*, 2013 WL 6816375, at \*15 (“Even if it found that decedent had a knife in  
16 his hand, that alone would not necessarily bring the situation into a ‘purpose to harm’ situation,  
17 since a reasonable jury could find that decedent was not advancing on [the officer], nor threatening  
18 him with the knife.”). Plaintiffs go on to point out that courts have denied summary judgment when  
19 it was unclear, because of the disputed facts, which standard applied. *See id.* (finding that there was  
20 “a genuine dispute about whether [the officer] had the ‘luxury’ of deliberation” and denying  
21 summary judgment in favor of the defendants on the plaintiffs’ Fourteenth Amendment due process  
22 claim because “a reasonable jury could find [that the officer] acted with deliberate indifference in a  
23 non-emergency situation, or that he acted with a purpose to harm decedent”); *McCloskey*, 2012 WL  
24 646219, at \*4 (denying summary judgment in favor of the officer on the plaintiffs’ Fourteenth  
25 Amendment due process claim because “the facts relevant to a determination of whether [the officer]  
26 had time to fully consider his use of pepper spray and/or whether he acted with ‘deliberate  
27 indifference’” are disputed); *F.C. ex rel. Rios v. County of Los Angeles*, No. CV 10-169 CAS (Rzx),  
28 2010 WL 5157339, at \*5-6 (C.D. Cal. Dec. 13, 2010) (denying summary judgment in favor of the

1 defendants on the plaintiffs' Fourteenth Amendment due process claim where the facts regarding  
2 how the shooting occurred were disputed).

3 The court notes that Defendants failed to respond in their reply to any of Plaintiffs' arguments  
4 about the Fourteenth Amendment claim. *See generally* Reply, ECF No. 110. Based on the record  
5 and the authorities cited, the court denies Defendants' motion insofar as it asks the court conclude  
6 that the officers did not violate Plaintiffs' Fourteenth Amendment due process right to be free from  
7 interference with their rights to familial relationships.

8 **B. The Court Cannot Say at this Time that the Officers are Entitled to Qualified Immunity**

9 Defendants assert that even if Officers Ortiz and Wilson violated Plaintiffs' Fourteenth  
10 Amendment rights by using excessive force that shocks the conscience, they are entitled to qualified  
11 immunity. But just as their qualified immunity argument fails with respect to Plaintiffs' Fourth  
12 Amendment claim, their arguments fails with respect to Plaintiffs' Fourteenth Amendment claim,  
13 too. This is because, based on the evidence presented by both sides, it is unclear what the situation  
14 was, and thus the court cannot decide as a matter of law whether it would have been "clear to a  
15 reasonable officer that his conduct was unlawful in the situation he confronted." *Saucier*, 533 U.S.  
16 at 202. In these circumstances, the court denies Defendants' motion insofar as it asks the court  
17 conclude that the officers are entitled to qualified immunity.

18 **IV. PLAINTIFFS' MONELL CLAIM**

19 Plaintiffs' third claim is against CCSF for its failure to train the officers. In their opposition,  
20 Plaintiffs state that they do not oppose Defendants' motion for summary judgment with respect to  
21 Plaintiffs' third claim. Opposition, ECF No. 120 at 9 n.1. Accordingly, the court grants Defendants'  
22 motion with respect to Plaintiffs' third claim.

23 **V. PLAINTIFFS' WRONGFUL DEATH CLAIM**

24 Plaintiffs' fourth claim is against CCSF (under a theory of respondeat superior) for wrongful  
25 death, *see* Cal. Civ. Proc. Code § 377.60, which is simply the statutorily-created right of an heir to  
26 recover damages resulting from a tortious act which results in the decedent's death," *Gilmore v.*  
27 *Superior Court*, 230 Cal. App. 3d 416, 420 (Cal. Ct. App. 1991) (citations omitted). "The elements  
28 of the cause of action for wrongful death are the tort (negligence or other wrongful act), the resulting

1 death, and the damages, consisting of the pecuniary loss suffered by the heirs.” *Quiroz v. Seventh*  
2 *Ave. Center*, 140 Cal. App. 4th 1256, 1264 (Cal. Ct. App. 2006). The California Supreme Court has  
3 held that “an officer’s lack of due care can give rise to negligence liability for the intentional  
4 shooting death of a suspect.” *Munoz v. Olin*, 24 Cal. 3d 629, 634 (1979) (citing *Grudt v. City of Los*  
5 *Angeles*, 2 Cal. 3d 575, 587 (1970)). In this context, to prove the tort, a plaintiff must show that the  
6 officer violated his “duty to use reasonable force under the totality of the circumstances.” *See*  
7 *Brown v. Ransweiler*, 171 Cal. App. 4th 516, 526 n.10 (Cal. Ct. App. 2009). Moreover, where the  
8 officer’s preshooting conduct did not cause the plaintiff any injury independent of the injury  
9 resulting from the shooting, the officer’s preshooting conduct is properly “included in the totality of  
10 circumstances surrounding [his] use of deadly force.” *Hayes v. County of San Diego (“Hayes I”)*, 57  
11 Cal. 4th 622, 632 (2013).

12 Defendants argue that CCSF is not liable because the officers are protected by several statutory  
13 privileges and thus are immune from liability. *See Gilmore*, 230 Cal. App. 3d at 421 (“A privileged  
14 act is by definition one for which the actor is absolved of any tort liability, whether premised on the  
15 theory of negligence or of intent.”) (citations omitted).

16 First, they argue that they are protected under California Penal Code § 835a, which provides that

17 [a]ny peace officer who has reasonable cause to believe that the person to be arrested  
18 has committed a public offense may use reasonable force to effect the arrest, to  
19 prevent escape, or to overcome resistance.” It goes on to provide in pertinent part  
20 that “[a] peace officer who makes or attempts to make an arrest need not retreat or  
desist from his efforts by reason of the resistance or threatened resistance of the  
person being arrested.

21 As to Officers Ortiz’s and Wilson’s shooting of Bui, Defendants argue that the “reasonableness”  
22 standard for a wrongful death claim is the same as the standard for a Fourth Amendment excessive  
23 force claim and that Plaintiffs’ wrongful death claim fails because Plaintiffs’ Fourth Amendment  
24 excessive force claim fails. But as explained above, there are genuine issues of material fact that  
25 prevent the court from ruling that the officers’ conduct did not violate the Fourth Amendment, and  
26 this means that the court also cannot rule that the officers were not liable for wrongful death.  
27 Defendants’ reliance on *Hernandez v. City of Pomona* does not change this outcome because in that  
28 case the officers’ conduct was determined to be reasonable under the Fourth Amendment. *See* 46

1 Cal. 4th 501, 512, 516 (2009) (plaintiffs were collaterally estopped from bringing a wrongful death  
2 claim based on the officers’ use of deadly force because a federal court previously ruled that the  
3 officers’ conduct (shooting the decedent) was reasonable under the Fourth Amendment). Here, there  
4 has been no such ruling, and the court will not make such a ruling on summary judgment.

5 As to Officers Ortiz’s and Wilson’s preshooting conduct, Defendant argue that the officers were  
6 entitled to persist in arresting Bui, in the face of his resistance. They again cite *Hernandez*, which  
7 rejected the plaintiffs’ “preshooting negligence claim” because the officers had probable cause to  
8 arrest the decedent and, under Section 835a, could use reasonable force to arrest him and did not  
9 have an obligation to stop trying to do so. *See id.* at 518-21. But in that case, the court’s decision  
10 was made “in light of the [federal court’s previous] finding that the shooting was reasonable,” so the  
11 court focused only on the officers’ pre-shooting pursuit of the decedent. *See id.* Here, on the other  
12 hand, Plaintiffs’ wrongful death claim is not limited only to the officers’ preshooting conduct;  
13 instead, it is based on the totality of the circumstances surrounding his death, and it is still undecided  
14 whether the officers’ shooting of Bui was reasonable. Thus, the officers’ preshooting conduct  
15 should not be considered separately from their shooting of Bui. *See Hayes I*, 57 Cal. 4th at 632  
16 (where the officer’s preshooting conduct did not cause the plaintiff any injury independent of the  
17 injury resulting from the shooting, the officer’s preshooting conduct is properly “included in the  
18 totality of circumstances surrounding [his] use of deadly force”). Accordingly, the court cannot find  
19 that the officers are protected under Section 853a in these circumstances.

20 Second, Defendants argue that they are protected under California Penal Code § 196. “Under  
21 Penal Code section 196, a police officer who kills someone has committed a justifiable homicide if  
22 the homicide was necessarily committed in overcoming actual resistance to the execution of some  
23 legal process, or in the discharge of any other legal duty.” *Brown*, 171 Cal. App. 4th at 533 (internal  
24 quotation marks omitted). “The test for determining whether a homicide was justifiable under Penal  
25 Code section 196 is whether the circumstances reasonably create[d] a fear of death or serious bodily  
26 harm to the officer or to another.” *Id.* (internal quotation marks omitted) (alteration in original).  
27 The obvious problem with this argument is that the court cannot say at this stage whether Officers  
28 Ortiz’s and Wilson’s actions were reasonable because there are genuine issues of material fact

1 regarding what happened, and under Plaintiffs' version of the facts, a reasonable jury could conclude  
2 that the officers' actions were not reasonable. Plaintiffs cite several opinions where courts have  
3 rejected Section 196 immunity arguments in this situation, *see Mitchell v. City of Pittsburg*, No. C  
4 09-00794 SI, 2013 WL 5487816, at \*12 (N.D. Cal. Oct. 1, 2013) (rejecting on summary judgment  
5 the defendants' Section 196 immunity argument where a reasonable jury could find that the officer  
6 used excessive force in shooting the decedent); *McMurray v. County of Sacramento*, No. CIV S-09-  
7 2245 GEB, 2011 WL 4709876, at \*28 (Oct. 4, 2011) (rejecting on summary judgment the  
8 defendants' Section 196 immunity argument because "there are genuine issue[s] of material fact  
9 regarding whether [the officer's] use of deadly force was reasonable, and whether the circumstances  
10 surrounding the incident reasonably created a fear in [the officer] of great bodily injury or death to  
11 himself or others"); *Adams v. Speers*, No. CV-F-02-5741 LJO, 2004 WL 5567292, at \*15 (Dec. 16,  
12 2004) (rejecting on summary judgment the defendants' Section 196 immunity argument where the  
13 plaintiffs "raised factual issues [about] whether [the officer] was in danger when he fired six shots,"  
14 "whether [the officer] acted reasonably," and "whether the circumstances generated a reasonable  
15 fear of danger to [the officer] or others"; "Since this Court is not prepared to rule that [the officer's]  
16 conduct does not shock the conscience, this Court is not prepared to rule he justifiably killed [the  
17 decedent] under California Penal Code sections or was otherwise immune."); *cf. Martinez*, 47 Cal.  
18 App. 4th at 349-50 (because the court concluded that the officers acted reasonably under a 42 U.S.C.  
19 § 1983 excessive force claim analysis, the court also concluded that the plaintiffs' wrongful death  
20 claims were barred under Section 196), and Defendants failed to address any of them in their reply,  
21 *see generally* Reply, ECF No. 110. This court likewise declines to find that the officers are  
22 protected under Section 196 in these circumstances.

23 Third, Defendants argue that they are protected by California Government Code § 821.6, which  
24 provides that "[a] public employee is not liable for injury caused by his instituting or prosecuting  
25 any judicial or administrative proceeding within the scope of his employment, even if he acts  
26 maliciously and without probable cause." As the Ninth Circuit has explained, "[t]he provision's  
27 principal function is to provide relief from malicious prosecution," *Blankenhorn v. City of Orange*,  
28 485 F.3d 463, 487-88 (9th Cir. 2007) (citing *Kayfetz v. California*, 156 Cal. App. 3d 491, 497 (Cal.

1 Ct. App. 1984)), but it “also ‘extends to actions taken in preparation for formal proceedings,’  
2 including actions ‘incidental to the investigation of crimes,’” *id.* at 488 (citing *Amylou R. v. County*  
3 *of Riverside*, 28 Cal. App. 4th 1205, 1209-11 (Cal. Ct. App. 1994)). “Even so, section 821.6, as it  
4 applies to police conduct, is limited to actions taken in the course or as a consequence of an  
5 investigation.” *Id.* With this in mind, Plaintiffs point out that the problem with Defendants’  
6 argument is that the officers’ shooting of Bui is “not the sort of conduct to which section 821.6  
7 immunity has been held to apply.” *See id.* (citing *Crowe v. County of San Diego*, 303 F. Supp. 2d  
8 1050, 1120 (S.D. Cal. 2004), *rev’d in part on other grounds*, 608 F.3d 406 (9th Cir. 2010) (applying  
9 Section 821.6 immunity to officers who conducted interrogations and strip searches during the  
10 course of a murder investigation); *Baughman v. California*, 38 Cal. App. 4th 182, 191-93 (1995)  
11 (applying Section 821.6 immunity to officers who destroyed computer floppy disks during a search  
12 related to an investigation of computer equipment theft); *Amylou R.*, 28 Cal. App. 4th at 1210-11  
13 (applying Section 821.6 immunity to officers who took a rape and attempted murder victim against  
14 her will to the crime scene and later told neighbors that she was lying about what happened)).  
15 Rather, in this case, “the alleged tortious conduct occurred during an arrest, not an investigation.”  
16 *See id.* (rejecting the defendants’ Section 821.6 argument because the plaintiff’s assault and battery,  
17 negligence, and intentional infliction of emotional distress claims are based on acts that allegedly  
18 happened during his arrest, not pursuant to an investigation into his guilt); *Tien Van Nguyen v. City*  
19 *of Union City*, No. C-13-01753-DMR, 2013 WL 3014136, at \*7 (N.D. Cal. June 17, 2013) (rejecting  
20 the defendants’ Section 821.6 argument because the plaintiffs’ intentional infliction of emotional  
21 distress claim was based on the defendant officers’ use of excessive force against him during his  
22 arrest); *Medora v. City and County of San Francisco*, No. C 06-0558 EDL, 2007 WL 2522319, at  
23 \*10 (N.D. Cal. Aug. 31, 2007) (rejecting the defendants’ Section 821.6 argument because “there is  
24 no evidence that the officers at the scene of the excessive force incident were engaged in the  
25 investigation of a crime for purposes of immunity under this section”). Defendants’ attempt to  
26 distinguish *Blankenhorn* on the ground that the officers’ “decision to seek out and confront Bui  
27 immediately, without resorting to other tactics,” was “investigative in nature,” Motion, ECF No. 81  
28 at 35 n.14, is not persuasive in light of the authorities cited by Plaintiffs (and which were not



1 addressed by Defendants in their reply, *see generally* Reply, ECF No. 110). Accordingly, the court  
2 finds that Section 821.6 immunity does not protect Officers Ortiz and Wilson from liability for  
3 Plaintiffs' wrongful death claim.

4 In sum, the court finds that it cannot yet determine whether the officers are protected by  
5 California Penal Code §§ 835a or 196 and that California Government Code § 821.6 does not apply  
6 here. Accordingly, the court denies Defendants' motion insofar as it asks the court conclude that  
7 they are entitled to summary judgment on Plaintiffs' fourth claim.

8 **CONCLUSION**

9 Based on the foregoing, the court **GRANTS IN PART** and **DENIES IN PART** Defendants'  
10 motion for summary judgment. The court **DENIES** the motion with respect to Plaintiffs' first claim  
11 for a violation of the Fourth Amendment, Plaintiffs' second claim for a violation of the Fourteenth  
12 Amendment, and Plaintiffs' fourth claim for wrongful death. The court **GRANTS** the motion with  
13 respect to Plaintiffs' third claim under *Monell*.

14 **IT IS SO ORDERED.**

15 Dated: July 25, 2014



16 LAUREL BEELER  
United States Magistrate Judge

